A PROGRAM EVALUATION RESEARCH STUDY ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
MENTORS IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM
IN A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL

A Dissertation

Submitted by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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A Program Evaluation Study on the Implementation
of the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program
in a Public High School

The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program is the subject of this research study.

MVP is a high school leadership and mentoring program that focuses on promoting

gender respect and preventing harassment, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse in

middle schools and high schools.

This program evaluation study of the MVP program utilizes both quantitative and

qualitative data. The findings suggest the MVP training supports the mentors in their

ability to become active bystanders and leaders in this work, not only in the short term

and while they are in the program, but over the long term, when they are no longer part of

the program. The self-evaluation findings also suggest that for the students not in the

MVP program, witnessing, dialoguing and reflecting on the dramatic role plays

contribute to their becoming more aware and active bystanders in harassing, sexually

harassing and teen dating abuse situations.

Additionally, an action plan is presented on ways of strengthening the Mentors in

Violence Prevention program described in this dissertation, and on establishing Mentors

in Violence Prevention programs such as this one in other public high schools.

DEDICATION

To the courageous and dedicated MVP students and alumni MVP students at Newton North and Newton South High Schools who inspire me daily and touch my soul, their voices are clear and powerful

AND

To the committed teachers/advisors at Newton North and South High Schools, and at Day, Oak Hill, Brown and Bigelow Middle Schools; you are the champions,

AND

To my Mom and Dad, who have lovingly supported and encouraged me throughout my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Overview of the Study

Chapter One includes a history of the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program in Newton along with my teaching chronology and my involvement in the program. The research focus is presented along with the data components of this program evaluation research study. The goals of the program are also explained, along with key terms and how they relate to the MVP program.

Chapter Two reviews the literature that the study is based on. There are three sections to the literature review. The first section focuses on three theoretical models of adolescent development. These include the theories of Social (2006) and Emotional Intelligence (1995) as described by Goleman, the Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) from the teachings of Miller, Surrey and colleagues (1991) at the Stone Center, Wellesley College, and the Multiple-Intelligence work of Gardner (1983). The second section focuses on how the expressive arts, in particular drama therapy and dance/movement therapy, help students integrate their learning when it comes to decision-making skills, building community and intervening when witnessing red flags in harassing, sexually harassing and teen dating abuse situations. The third and last section reviews violence prevention programs that use interactive theatre at the middle, high school and college levels.

Chapter Three discusses the rationale for conducting the study, the research design and the analysis of this program evaluation research study. The limitations of the study are also introduced. Prior methodologies used in other school-based violence

prevention programs are reviewed. The types of data collection used for this evaluation research study are also described in Chapter Three and consist of 1) a pre and post questionnaire completed by the high school mentors at Newton North High School before and after their MVP training, 2) a questionnaire completed by 18 middle school teachers who were present during the 8th grade mentoring sessions, 3) a posttest feedback questionnaire completed by those high school students who attended MVP Day at Newton North High School on February 13, 2007, and 4) interviews with six former student mentors and their retrospective reflections on the program. The questionnaires, interview questions, feedback form and schedule of MVP Day can all be found in Appendices A, B, C, D, and E.

Chapter Four reports the research findings and a summary from the data collected from the four components of the research study. The data is presented in the form of written narrative as well as Tables 1-7 and Figures1-3.

Chapter Five includes a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature review found in Chapter Two. It includes an Action Plan suggesting ideas for improving the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program. Personal qualities needed to implement a program such as MVP are reviewed and my personal reflections about the process of adapting, creating and implementing the MVP program are shared. The "integrated pedagogical process" used in this study is outlined and implications and suggestions for further study are also presented.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A Program Evaluation Study on the Implementation of the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program in a Public High School

Personal Background

I have been committed, and dedicated, to supporting students' cognitive, physical, social, emotional and relational development since the beginning of my professional life as a teacher/therapist. Assisting students to integrate wellness and prevention messages and strategies in order to support themselves, their health and their well being has always been a priority for me. During my first year as an educator, while teaching history, my vision and goals for my future career path became clearer, leading to my returning to graduate school to pursue studies in dance and dance therapy. After graduate school, along with teaching history and dance, I worked as a dance/movement therapist with special needs students in the public schools. I began my journey of using the expressive therapies to assist children in finding their "voice," in celebrating their own individuality, and to support and involve them, through the arts, in the wellness and prevention work available to them in the schools.

Consequently, I have straddled two worlds, those of education and dance/movement therapy. It is at this interface—this place where education, health/healing and the expressive therapies meet—that I conduct my work. I recently

found a quote that describes my journey in dance and education: "Let your life lightly dance on the edges of time, like dew on the tip of a leaf" (Tagore, 2006). I believe all of the programs I have developed and/or brought into the schools were ahead of their time, and in 1993, my beginning involvement in violence prevention in the schools symbolized for me this place "on the edges of time," as Tagore describes it.

These "edges" can be lonely, tenuous, risky and, at the same time, amazing places to dance. My attention and intention have had to be fully present, and my ability to be committed; staying with my vision while engaging and moving with a range of movement qualities and combinations, has had to be ongoing. The dance and the dew are metaphors for being in the moment, for being able to nurture and support while at the same time being ready to move lightly and with strength, all the while transitioning and evolving to the next sequence. The continuous thread throughout my career, and one that is repeatedly reflected throughout this dissertation, is my dedication to my students and my commitment to guiding them to develop their cognitive, physical, social, emotional and relational self in order that each one can succeed and find joy in his or her life.

Whether it be the dance program where students are guided to find their expressive voice, the Peaceable School classes in the middle school that focus on bullying prevention or the MVP program that promotes gender respect, these programs become the vessel, or container, in which the integrated pedagogical process is held. This approach includes and interweaves the creative art process of conceptualizing and creating interactive activities through mentoring others with relational cultural theory (RCT) from the Stone Center where relationships are seen as enhancing the learning and growth of all involved. The teacher guides the student through an experiential learning

process that involves body sensing, feeling, knowing and action. The development of social and emotional learning, expressive arts, and relational cultural theory are interrelated; each builds on and spirals with the others.

Questions that arise from working with the students are how can students develop their social, emotional and relational selves and tap into these different parts of themselves when making decisions? How can students find it within themselves to discover the power of relationships, empathy and of becoming an active bystander? How can students experience "relational mindfulness" and how might it affect their connection to and awareness of themselves, each other and the larger community? Our connections to self, each other and the group nurture us, sustain us and allow us to grow (Surrey, 2005). For this reason, a constant theme throughout the wellness and prevention work I do in the schools is connection—connection to self, to each other, to school and to community.

The Creative Dance Program

In 1983 I developed the Creative Dance Program at Day Middle School in Newton in order to address the challenges that many adolescent girls face. Adolescent girls need to define who they are, feel good about who they are and work together in community where they can sense their own body and self while connecting to the group. Dance can be therapeutic when used as a tool for enabling a child to consciously connect to his/her body, accept his/her body and creatively express himself/herself in a physical way.

During the 1992–1993 school year, I conducted a yearlong research study with the 20 eighth-grade girls in my dance class at Day Middle School. The study investigated whether creative dance helped improve these students' self esteem and whether it allowed them to connect with and express their voice, which is often silenced in many girls at this age. This was based upon and supported by the work of Gilligan (1992). Interviews were completed and videos were recorded of each girl dancing along with administering the Piers-Harris Self Esteem Questionnaire at the beginning and end of the year.

The results from this study suggested the positive developmental effects of creative dance on increased self-esteem. One of the many insights gained from the study was that, instead of dealing with a crisis after it occurred, the school needed a prevention program in place to help students become aware of and cope with developmental challenges before they escalated into crises. Students brought up issues such as bullying, sexual harassment, eating disorders, exclusion and the difficulty of navigating relationships with friends and family.

The Bullying Prevention Program

The information gained from the above study led me to develop a bullying prevention curriculum, *Creating a Peaceable School, Confronting Intolerance and Bullying.* This middle school prevention and support program assists students with difficult issues such as bullying, exclusion, stereotyping and racism. This is important to note because the foundation of the comprehensive health program was based on the developmental needs expressed by the students from my 8th grade dance class. It also led to the formation of

individual task force groups consisting of parents, teachers, and students to collaborate and lay the groundwork for developing a comprehensive health program for all middle school students. Administrative support for the program was strong and helped in further developing the middle school comprehensive health curriculum. It is a testament to an administration that was willing to listen to the expressed needs of the students. It is also noteworthy that this occurred well before the tragic shootings of Columbine, when violence prevention programs were still on the cutting edge of education.

I was fortunate to read an article about Olweus (1993) and his bullying prevention research in a Harvard Educational Newsletter, which led to my meeting him at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston. Through this meeting, I obtained the questionnaires developed by Olweus' research team, and from this information the research tool was developed for assessing the "Creating a Peaceable School Program" (anti-bullying program) in Newton.

Research studies were conducted to evaluate the Peaceable School program in both 1996 and 2000. The findings of these studies suggested that the *Creating a Peaceable School* curriculum taught at Day Middle School decreased bullying in all three grades. Each research project I conducted reflected the learning from the previous study and proved instrumental in creating stronger and more holistic programs that supported the overall development of students. My work in the schools up to this point influenced my decision to pursue a doctoral program and engage in doctoral studies in order to continue evidence-based research projects and gain the expertise necessary to advocate for the social, emotional and relational development of students. Funding to support these projects often depended on the data collected and the results that were documented, with monies being made available to support continued development of these wellness and

prevention programs. The Mentors in Violence Prevention program in Newton began in 1998 with the assistance of Northeastern University and led to two further research studies—one of which was a put-down survey administered to all students at Day Middle School (2004) that pointed out the three groups being harassed the most were special education students, those perceived to be gay, and students who appearance was considered "different." The second study is this current program evaluation study of the Mentors in Violence Prevention, which is the subject of this dissertation.

The Mentors in Violence Prevention Program

In 1997 I attended a gender workshop at Wellesley College. There I met Jackson Katz and Byron Hurt, who lead a group on the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) program at Northeastern University. I was deeply moved and impressed by their presentation and felt that such a mentoring program would also benefit middle school students. In addition to being a middle school teacher, I was the mother of a 9-year-old daughter and 12-year-old son and I was well aware of how older students can be strong role models for younger students. I was continually asking myself the question, what are the best strategies to help adolescents integrate messages and knowledge of wellness and prevention into their life decisions? It occurred to me at the Wellesley workshop that the MVP program Katz and Hurt described could serve as a model for a pilot study applied to middle school and high school students. The Mentors in Violence Prevention program at Northeastern was in its third year at the time, and their program focused on men's violence against women and educated college male athletes to mentor high school male

athletes. The program also focused on men and women being allies working together in preventing men's violence against women as well as on utilizing a bystander approach in helping to empower the bystander with MVP's prevention efforts (Katz, O'Brien, Hurt, 1993; Katz, 2006).

In 1998, Northeastern's MVP program was adapted to meet the developmental needs of high school and middle school students. With the assistance of members of the Northeastern group and staff from Newton North, the program was piloted with 14 student mentors, training them to be leaders and mentors in preventing harassment, sexual harassment and dating abuse. The students spoke to small groups of 8th graders at Day Middle School. During the first three years of the program, I was a willing but unpaid volunteer. After those three years, money was obtained through federal grants—first called the Safe Schools Grant, now called the Safe Schools-Healthy Students Grant set up by the current administration's No Child Left Behind (2001) Legislation—that was part of the government's efforts to keep our schools safe and drug-free. After funds were secured, the program was further developed, expanded and became more established within the school system.

During the second year, we held an assembly along with staff from Northeastern to inform students at the high school about the mentoring program. By that time, the training curriculum was evolving, and an increased interest on the part of the high school students was seen in the higher numbers of students applying to the program.

In order to be part of the MVP after-school program, students needed parental permission to attend the two training days and middle school classes. They also had to write an essay on why they wanted to be an MVP mentor and on what qualities they felt

they could bring to the program. In addition, a teacher reference was necessary. Through this application process, students more or less selected themselves to be part of the program. The exception to this pattern occurred when a student was in poor academic standing, or when a student did not receive a positive recommendation. This process became most challenging when more and more students began to apply to the program. The question became, how do we accommodate everyone who wants to take part in the program? During the past two years we have accepted everyone who has applied to the program.

Currently, the MVP training includes interactive activities and exercises that facilitate both individual and collective group learning processes, while at the same time supporting a community, or group "we" (Shem, Surrey, 1998) that evolves throughout the process. An opening activity to the training is a gesture piece that the students move through that speaks to the goals of MVP and embodies the individual and group processes of Newton's program.

Another interactive activity that promotes empathy is a visualization exercise where the students recall a time when they were the targets of harassment or when they witnessed a harassing situation where the bystander remained silent. Next they put the image into a literal or abstract drawing of the experience. They then find a partner and share with each other their process. The third activity done with the entire group is in a room where there are three designated areas labeled Agree, Disagree, and Unsure. A comment is read and students must travel to the section of the room that represents their belief about the statement. This activity encourages dialogue among the students about different ideas and values. Students may move to another section if their thinking

changes. The activity encourages an open process of discussion and provides the ability to shift your thinking. Both of these activities create a safe space and give attention to looking at harassment, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse situations.

During the training, a safe place for sharing feelings is established through the activities that are employed such as the few mentioned. The training interweaves conceptual and experiential learning, affecting students' thoughts, feelings and questions about themselves and others, as well as about the content and material that the MVP program deals with. During the training process, the students have the opportunity to change, evolve and grow, transferring their learning into action. Throughout the experiential process of the training, students share their learning and truth with others from an embodied place within them. The students participate in dialogues with partners and within the group, clarifying their thinking, feeling and behavior regarding harassment, sexual harassment and dating abuse. After the training, the individual and collective processes of being an MVP mentor and leader continues through the work these students do both in the high school and middle schools.

At this point, there are 200 male and female MVP mentors who visit 950 8th grade students every year, making three visits to each 8th grade homeroom. A consistent group of mentors goes into 8th grade homerooms and delivers the lessons. The first lesson discusses the media's influence on stereotypical concepts of what it means to be a man or a woman and how this affects the roles men and women assume in society. The second lesson involves a series of role plays about developmental issues that affect middle school students: cyberbullying, exclusion, put-downs and sexual harassment. The high school students enact the role plays to help raise the consciousness of the middle school

students about the kinds and range of options they have in responding to these situations. The last lesson deals with the ways disrespectful, bullying situations can escalate into even greater problematic behaviors. The mentors help individuals in the class, along with the class as a group, develop an action plan that can be used at the school to further awareness, promote respect and generate ideas for building community.

On the high school level, MVP Days are presented annually to the student community, increasing awareness through the use of role plays of developmentally challenging social situations, a speak out, media presentations, guest speakers that highlight MVP goals as well as a clothesline display with statistics and resources. In 2003 one of the MVP student leaders felt that more input from student mentors was needed in order to connect and reach the high school student participants on MVP Day. It was suggested that the mentors themselves could write, direct, and perform role plays that could stimulate dialogue about difficult issues that student's experience. This was a turning point in our work; acting out the psychodrama role plays brought a new dimension to the MVP program at the high school. Scenarios had been spoken out loud and read about in the middle school, and informally acted out in the training at the high school. Adults and several students had in fact scripted these role plays. But until the students took on the tasks of writing, directing, and acting out the role plays, they had never felt full ownership of them.

There was a core group of mentors who wanted to present a role play scenario during MVP Day. They were committed to doing this. With the collaboration of the drama teacher, a script was created to use as a structure that we would explore and improvise from there. The role play was a sexual assault scene that included peer

pressure to go along with the flow of the moment and stereotyped gender roles. What unfolded was a role play that clearly conveyed a scene resulting in the consumption of too much alcohol, pressure to be "cool" and the target of the role play ignoring her own feelings of not wanting to attend the party.

By listening to the students creating the scenario, and guiding them while giving them freedom to allow the process to unfold, we all felt good about the powerful message the role play communicated. We continued to work at how to get the audience involved in a reflective discussion after enacting the scenario. Many hours were spent with the actors trying to create a balance between creating an authentic scene and allowing a reflective learning experience for the actors and audience. There were disagreements along the way between the advisors and the students, but during the process we all listened to each other and worked together. Before we presented the role play on MVP Day, we invited the Principal, the Chairperson of the Guidance Department, the Coordinator of the Health and Wellness Department for the City, the drama teacher who had assisted us in the process and a parent to all meet with us. The MVP program was being observed very carefully by the school administration. We needed input and support for what we were doing, and what resulted was an amazing meeting with suggestions and affirmation about how important this work is.

On MVP Day in February 2003, the role play that was enacted was powerful. There was much in the scene the students could relate to. After the scene, the actors spoke about what it was like for them to play their character. The audience then asked the actors questions, which the actors answered while still in character. Next the actors spoke from their personal perspective. The audience continued to ask questions of the actors,

who were now out of character. The questions, answers and comments that were elicited established a strong connection between the actors and audience. This scenario experience was significant because it began the precedent for students creating the role plays for MVP Day and was expanded the following year to present role plays to the middle school students as well.

Audience involvement and how to provide an interactive group experience also evolved since 2003. I believe the role play format and audience as witness allows for a group experience and the possibility of facilitating a "collective felt sense" and/or "collective shift." When a group becomes more mindful and present about what they are sensing and feeling, as a group, a physical release can be kinesthetically felt. One example of this took place during MVP Day in 2005 when a student called out to an actor during a role play involving a sexual assault, "Go for it, Zach." Although there was many teachers present, after the scene was completed it was the student audience who directed their comments to the "calling out" student on his behavior, thereby affecting the "collective felt sense" and "collective felt shift" within the group. The audience was silent and the tension within the entire room was palpable. It is precisely this individual and/or group "felt sense," within an integrated pedagogy that is the essence of my work and that I describe here and refer to throughout this dissertation.

The work of three educators' (Freire, 1970; Boal, 1985; and Rohd, 1998) resonated with what we were doing with the role plays. Boal and Rohd were both inspired by the work of Freire and all three were inspirational and affirming in providing a theoretical context for what we were doing with the role play process in MVP. Freire (1970), a Brazilian educator, believed we learn by doing and engaging in dialogue. In

dialogue we work with each other, question each other and respect each other, and this interaction with each other can lead to greater meaning, understanding and communication. Boal, a good friend and a mentee of Freire, took these ideas and applied them to theatre. Boal (1985, 2002) created games for actors. He also proposed that the audience be involved in the process of creating these games. Rohd (1998), influenced by both of these educators, began a theater group to address the need for communicating about HIV/AIDS and prevention. Out of his work with this group he expanded his ideas to include theater opportunities and dialogue about other prevention areas, such as, drugs, alcohol, etc. Rohd's adult troupe travels around the country, engaging student, parent and adult audiences in prevention education and dialogue around these issues.

Summary

Newton's Mentors in Violence Prevention Program focuses on promoting gender respect, inherent in this is respecting students' individual differences, raising awareness about stereotypes promoted by the media, understanding the qualities of healthy/unhealthy relationships and promoting the role of the active bystander in preventing harassment, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse in the middle and high schools. The MVP Program is currently present in both high schools and all four middle schools in the city of Newton, though my research study focuses only on the program at Newton North High School. The middle schools that feed into Newton North (Day and Bigelow) are mentioned in relationship to the Newton North High School students' training and to their being observed by the middle school homeroom teachers. In my program evaluation

study, in addition to evaluating the training of the students and the mentoring process at the middle schools, I have also focused on the role plays that are performed during MVP Day at Newton North and the perceived behavioral changes of those witnessing the role plays. The role plays performed during MVP Day highlight the "red flags" that lead to harassment, sexual harassment and dating abuse. The audience members' interacting, reflecting and dialoging with the actors and each other helps provide students with tools and options for viewing situations differently. The students' witnessing, dialoguing and reflecting, in relationship with others, helps them develop a "mindfulness of other-in-relation" attitude (Surrey, 2005) and reinforces their understanding that we are not alone and that we can empathize with and support each other. Since this material can trigger experiences and emotional issues for the students, it is most important that community resources as well as a support system within the school, and a network of counselors are always available.

The current goals of the MVP leadership program in Newton are to provide high school students the experience of mentoring their peers and middle school students. The goals of the MVP training and mentoring process are to increase student awareness and options for intervening as an active bystander and to increase respectful interactions among peers. The mentoring process helps students integrate prevention and wellness messages into their lives by assisting them in making decisions and taking action to support their health. The consistent messages communicated at all six secondary schools help to build a safe and supportive community throughout the city.

The Methodological Approach and Research Question

The methodological approach I use to investigate the effectiveness of the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program at Newton North High School is a Program Evaluation Research Study. The high school has approximately 1800 students. I am the principal author and investigator of this study and also the coordinator of the MVP program. The data in this study will include four components: 1) pre and post questionnaires completed by the mentors before and after their MVP training, 2) questionnaires completed by middle school teachers who are in the classroom when the mentors present their lessons, 3) feedback surveys completed by those students who attended MVP Day at Newton North on February 4, 2007 and 4) interviews of six alumni student mentors representing different years of involvement in the program. These multiple sources of data will include both qualitative and quantitative research findings and the summative evaluation will discuss the four components of data collected. An action plan will also be included and will suggest ways of improving and strengthening the program within the Newton community, with the added goal of creating a model program that can be shared with other school systems.

In addition to conducting the program evaluation research study on the Mentors in Violence Prevention training and mentoring process, the specific research question that will be narrowed in on is, how do creating, witnessing and processing student performed role plays help MVP mentors and audience members integrate MVP's messages about harassment, sexual harassment and dating abuse and facilitate the transfer of knowledge into action?

Narrative of Key Terms and How They Are Integrated into MVP

Mentors in Violence Prevention Program is a leadership and mentoring program at Newton North High School that promotes gender respect, heightens awareness and helps prevent harassment, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse among students and their peers at the high school.

Mentors are the high school students who are part of the MVP program and are trained to be both peer mentors and also mentors to the middle school students in promoting respect and preventing harassment, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse. **Alumni Mentors** are the students who were in the MVP program while at Newton North High School and have since graduated. These students were interviewed and provided a retrospective view of their involvement in the MVP program.

Role Plays are the scenes created by the MVP mentors for their high school peers that are performed at MVP Day and for the middle school students during the lessons the mentors present at the middle schools. The role plays highlight the red flags that lead to harassment, sexual harassment and dating abuse, are based on students' experiences or observations and portray developmental difficult situations related to these issues.

Integrated Pedagogical Process is what I have labeled the process that is inherent in both the training of the mentors and the interactive activities that are presented during MVP Day at Newton North High School. Students are guided through an experiential learning process that involves body sensing, feeling, knowing and action.

The development of social and emotional learning, expressive arts and relational cultural theory are interrelated in this process; each builds on and spirals with the others.

Social intelligence, as Goleman defines it (2006), encompasses the skills we need to live in the world and with each other. Goleman speaks of "our brain's very design makes it sociable; we are wired to connect" (p. 4) with each other. Adolescents need to become aware of how their actions, and those of others, affect themselves and others. These are concepts that are discussed and reflected upon in the high school trainings, the middle school lessons and through the role plays presented during MVP Day.

Emotional Intelligence, or EQ (1995), as defined by Goleman, is composed of four areas: self-awareness, managing of self, empathy and the ability to socially interact. The MVP training and interactive activities, discussions, cooperative movement games, mentoring and presentation of role plays at both the middle schools and high school help to reinforce these qualities. **Relational Intelligence** is based on **Relational Cultural Theory** (Miller, Stiver, 1997). It is the ability to navigate relationships, increase empathy and feel individually and collectively empowered as our connections are experienced and strengthened. In MVP, the idea of the group "we" (1998), developed by Surrey and Bergman, is explored and promoted. "In addition to self and other, '"I"' and '"you,"' there is a third element which is called the '"we"' or the relationship or the '"connection"' (2007, p. xiii). The group "we" is the relationship made up of me and you and the group, and can contribute to a connected classroom or group experience (Beardall, Bergman, Surrey).

One focus of the program evaluation is the effect the interactive/creative role play process-- writing, performing, witnessing and reflecting by high school students—have

on their peers' behavior. It is also my assumption that the students who witness the role plays also become more aware of their sense of **relational mindfulness,** which "is the mindfulness of self-in-relation, mindfulness of other-in-relation, and mindfulness of the qualities and movement of [a] relationship" (Surrey, 2005, p. 94). A goal of the mentoring program consistent with "relational mindfulness" is to develop the role of the **active bystander.** An active bystander is a person who assists someone else in an emotional, physical or manipulative "power over" situation by taking an active role. This can be manifested in many ways, such as by aiding the targeted person, speaking to the harasser, getting the help of a teacher or counselor or contacting professional resource organizations for further assistance.

Through the process of witnessing and dialoguing about the role plays as a community, I believe an individual can embody the experience through his or her kinesthetic senses, or what I call **body sense. Body sense** is an embodied experience that can be sensed, felt or acted (Cohen, 1992) upon through a person's mindful awareness of what he or she is feeling and experiencing. A **collective "felt sense"** (Gendlin, 1978) can occur when a group becomes more mindful and present about what they are sensing and feeling as the MVP students do in witnessing, reflecting and dialoguing about the MVP role plays. A **collective "felt shift"** (Gendlin, 1978) might happen when some members of the group understand, feels empathy and are moved by what they are seeing and feeling. This can also be accompanied by a physical release that can be kinesthetically felt as well as observed.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are three sections to my literature review. This literature review is directed toward violence prevention work with adolescents. The first section will focus on three theoretical models of adolescent development. The second section will focus on how the expressive arts, in particular drama therapy and dance/movement therapy, help students become more aware and mindful about themselves and others in integrating their learning when it comes to decision making skills and building community. The third and last section will review the latest statistics on violence among adolescents and look at a number of violence prevention programs that use interactive theatre at the middle, high school and college levels.

Section One

The first section of this literature review will focus on three developmental theories: Goleman's theory of Social (2006) and Emotional Intelligence (1995); the Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) from the teachings of Miller, Surrey and colleagues (1991) of the Stone Center, Wellesley College; and the multiple-intelligence work of Gardner (1983, 1991, 1993). I chose to focus on the above theoretical models because they emphasize a breadth of development. They focus on emotional growth as a continuum and explore a variety of learning styles, as well as address social, emotional and relational

development. Psychologists, educators and the theorists mentioned above agree that developmentally, socially competent adolescents need to feel self-worth in response to their rapidly changing physical, cognitive and emotional needs, as well as navigate their psychosocial and relational needs, in order to make moral and ethical choices and develop empathy and social skills.

Social and Emotional Intelligence

According to author and neuroscientist Goleman (1995, 2006), a child's emotional intelligence consists of self-awareness, control of impulsive behavior, motivation, empathy and social skills. Goleman speaks of a "rewiring" of the brain that occurs during adolescence and, as he points out, an opportunity for greater emotional learning at this time. Goleman states, "All emotions are, in essence, impulses to act, the instant plans for handling life that evolution has instilled in us" (p. 6). My premise is that by working on the components of social and emotional intelligence through kinesthetic awareness, mindfulness, physical involvement and the arts, a child can be helped to integrate his or her "body sense" (Beardall, 1995), or develop a body mindfulness of how his or her emotions register and prepare the body/mind for action.

Goleman (1995) speaks of emotional intelligence consisting of four areas—self-awareness, managing of self, empathy, and the ability to socially interact. Talking about the way education is thought of in society, Goleman (1998) states in *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, that "our entire system is geared to cognitive skills. But when it comes to learning emotional competencies, our system is sorely lacking. Capacities like

empathy or flexibility differ crucially from cognitive abilities; they draw from different areas of the brain" (p. 244). He continues,

> Cognitive abilities are based in the neocortex, the "thinking brain." But with personal and social competencies, additional brain areas come into play, mainly the circuitry that runs from the emotional centers—particularly the amygdala—deep in the center of the brain up to the prefrontal lobes, the brain's executive center. (p. 244)

In Goleman's (2007) new book *Social Intelligence,* he speaks of the biological basis of the "social brain[,] referring to the particular set of circuitry that is orchestrated as people relate to each other" (p. 80). He says social intelligence includes "two broad categories: social awareness, what we sense about others—and social facility, what we then do with that awareness" (p. 84). The research of Rizzolatti and Stern (2005) supports what they call an "empathic resonance" (p. 43). "Stern concludes that our nervous systems are constructed to be captured by the nervous systems of others, so that we can experience others as if from within their skin" (p. 43).

Due to the neurological wiring of the adolescent brain, Goleman claims that emotional intelligence continues to develop throughout adolescence and into adulthood. The scientific data he cites to support this theory are important as a basis for the rationale for providing programs that help students develop their social and emotional intelligence. These programs are significant because these skills are necessary for students' success in developing relationships and in developing a capacity for decision making in their lives both now, as maturing students, and later, in the workplace.

Relational Cultural Theory

The next theoretical area I want to discuss in section one is Relational Cultural Theory, or RCT (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, Surrey, 1991), which emphasizes the relational interconnectedness of all people. According to this theory, growth-fostering relationships are a human necessity, as people develop through their connectedness to each other. According to Miller and Stiver (1997), qualities of healthy connection are respect, engagement, zest, attention, empathy, diversity, mutuality and empowerment. Equally important phenomena in understanding the development of psychological distress and symptomology are disconnection and isolation. Disconnections, under certain conditions, however, can offer the opportunity for growth. If disconnections are acknowledged, and tools that can help address the problem are offered, working with disconnections can be healing (J. Surrey, personal communication, July 6, 2007).

Miller and Stiver (1997) define disconnection as the "psychological experience of rupture that occurs whenever a child or adult is prevented from participating in a mutually empathetic and mutually empowering interaction" (p. 65). Often "power over" another or over a group of people creates disconnection in relationships.

> Physical and sexual abuse represents the most severe form
> of psychological violation and disconnection that can occur
> whenever one person (or group of people) has greater
> power to define what can and cannot occur within
> relationships. Here is the complete opposite of the search
> for mutually empowering connections. (p. 82)

Based on Relational Cultural Theory, Bergman and Surrey (1998) developed the notion of "gender dialogue" to describe the communication between gender groups and wrote about the power of the dialogue in their book *We Have to Talk: Healing Dialogues between Men and Women*. This led them to explore further the impasses that often interfere with relational connections, and the concept and practice of the "we." Bergman and Surrey next began to apply their work to the relational development of children. Their collaboration with me led to the development of our curriculum, *Making Connections, Building Community and Gender Dialogue in Secondary Schools* (Beardall, Bergman and Surrey, 2007). In *Making Connections* we state,

> [I]n the relational model, the emphasis shifts the focus from
> 'I' and 'you'—that is, from the individual alone—to the
> quality of connections and disconnections between people.
> In addition to self and other, 'I' and 'you,' there is a third
> element in human experience, which is called the 'we' or
> 'the relationship' or 'the connection.' (2007, p. xiii)

Applying RCT to education and curriculum development encourages students to understand and accept differences and better navigate their relationships. RCT also helps to increase empathy and group empowerment, and, as students' connections are experienced and strengthened, students are more likely to become allies to each other. If our goal is to encourage students to be caring bystanders, then they need to feel connected to each other and feel part of a connected school. Creating connected schools where students feel supported, respected and part of the "we" is one of the anticipated applications of the Relational Cultural Theory in educational settings.

The power of connection that RCT strives to achieve leads to increased self-worth, energy, clarity, empowerment, and desire for more relationships. Further, there is an enhancement of what Surrey (2005) refers to as "relational mindfulness." Described in *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy* as "tripartite relational awareness," relational mindfulness is the "mindfulness of self-in-relation, mindfulness of other in-relation, and mindfulness of the qualities and movement of the relationship" (Surrey, 2005, p. 94). Here Surrey refers to the relationship between client and therapist, but she could as easily be writing about the relationship between students or between teacher and student when she says, "the relationship grows; it can be said to enlarge and grow in spaciousness, aliveness, freedom, spontaneity, resilience, and creative power" (Surrey, 2005, p.102). Relational mindfulness can be developed in group settings and classrooms as well as in a therapist's office, allowing all involved to experience the above qualities that Surrey speaks of. RCT emphasizes mutuality and authenticity in creating growth that fosters relational connections. We can begin to form a new model of psychological development within relationship, in which everyone participates in ways that foster the development of all the people involved, something we might call 'mutual psychological development'" (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, Surrey, p. 17).

Multiple Intelligences Theory

In addition to writing about social intelligence, Goleman (1995) also writes about Howard Gardner and his theory of multiple intelligences. According to Goleman, Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences recognizes that the human repertoire of

abilities goes far beyond the three R's, the narrow band of word-and-number skills that schools traditionally focus on. Gardner described his work to Goleman, saying, "the time has come to broaden our notion of the spectrum of talents" (1983, p. 370).

The theory of multiple intelligences developed by Gardner can also be described as a philosophy of education. The different intelligences Gardner originally identified were linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Later he added two more intelligences, bringing the total to nine: naturalist and spiritual. Gardner explained that the intelligences are not dependent on each other but that they seldom operate in isolation from one another. Although each person possesses affinities for certain intelligences rather than others, we each use all of them to varying degrees. Gardner's work dramatically influenced teacher strategies on how to present material in the classroom and how to get students to integrate their knowledge. His inclusive ideas about learning through multiple intelligences validate the role of the expressive arts in learning in or out of the classroom.

Multiple Intelligence researchers have drawn educators' attention to an alternative theory other than the theory of general intelligence. They have put forth the idea that the arts are as much intellectual activities as are any of the three R's (Gardner, 1983). Gardner's work looks not only at how students learn, but also at how teachers teach, how curriculum is developed and at how schools are organized and operate.

All three of these theories, Social and Emotional Intelligence, Multiple Intelligences and Relational Cultural Theory, provide a foundation on which I base my work. They deal with issues such as social and emotional competencies, connection, disconnection, community building, problem solving, skill building, use of the arts,

witnessing, dialoging, reflecting and action. What they have in common and what they can give us is what Lantieri and Patti (1996) call

> an environment of openness and acceptance that encourages kids to risk this 'new way of being' . . . present, one that fosters cooperation and a belief in teamwork. When these foundation skills are offered to young people, the protective factors that foster resiliency are increased by making bonding possible. Kids can then develop the cognitive and social skills necessary for problem-solving and getting along with others. (p. 15)

Section Two

"In oneself lies the whole world, and if you know how to look and learn, then the door is there and the key is in your hand."

------Krishnamurti

This quote speaks to me deeply about the comprehensive way that the arts have guided me in the process of exploring, knowing, and understanding myself. It is from this place of "relational mindfulness" (Surrey, 2005) that I continually learn, evolve, teach and guide students in applying their knowledge to themselves throughout the wellness and prevention work I do in the schools.

Expressive Therapies

The second area of my literature review will focus on the expressive arts, in particular drama therapy and dance/movement therapy, and how they are used to assist

students in integrating wellness and prevention skills into their lives. The goal of this section is to review the literature by seminal thinkers in the area of the expressive therapies, and to review the role of these arts in facilitating understanding of the mind-body connection. This section discusses drama therapy and dance/movement therapy and focuses on the exploration of the mind-body connection and the ways in which the expressive therapies can be crucial in developing an awareness of self, self-expression, personal reflection, connection to self and community and the transferring of this knowledge into action. This section looks at how the expressive therapies can help students to be more mindful and present in relation to their decision-making capacity, and at how the use of expressive therapies can help to prevent risky behaviors that can endanger the wellbeing and health of students.

Dance/movement therapy is the younger of the two expressive therapies discussed in this section, although the relationship between dance and humans is ancient.

> Movement ritual has allowed individuals since the
> beginnings of civilization to bridge the gap between
> themselves and their universe. It affords a vehicle for their
> expression and transmission of fear, sadness, anger, and joy
> in the quest for survival and the meaning of life. (Lewis,
> 1979, p. 3)

Marian Chace, the founder and pioneer of dance as therapy, worked at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C.

> Chase discovered how to establish a therapeutic
> relationship on a movement level. She accomplished this
> by visually and kinesthetically perceiving the patient's

movement expressions. She literally expressed 'I know how you feel' in movement terms, thus establishing affective, empathetic interactions. (Chaiklin, Schmais, 1964, p. 21)

In part due to the work of Chace, the American Dance Therapy Association was founded in 1966 and continues as a strong and constantly growing organization today.

Another of the great seminal thinkers of dance/movement is Laban (1971). Laban believed movement could assist psychological, physical and emotional development, leading to a more mindful, balanced state that would be reflected in an individual's life. Through this balance, Laban suggested, one could find a "unity of nature and self-realization." He (1971) also said, "In dance we recognize an organized cooperation of our mental, emotional and bodily powers resulting in actions, that experience of which is of the greatest importance to the development of the personality" (p. 43). Furthermore, Laban wrote, "movement is the means of communication between people, because all our forms of expression—speaking, writing, singing—are carried by the flow of movement" (p. 95). Laban's work forms a clear foundation for using the expressive therapies in the development of adolescent problem solving and the development of resiliency skills. Since movement is the common denominator of all the arts, Laban's language of movement, and Bartenieff's (1980) body fundamentals speak to how movement patterns influence how we relate to each other, solve problems, and also become movement metaphors for how we are and how we act in the world.

Drama also has ancient roots, going back to ancient Greek and Roman times. Aristotle recognized "catharsis" as an effect of theatrical tragedy (p.16), and the history of the interrelationship of drama and healing is actually documented by Bailey (2005).

A seminal thinker in the psychodrama field is J. L. Moreno, who worked with children through having them enact role plays and through spontaneous play. "Moreno learned much about the therapeutic effects of his use of theater. He experimented with Role-Playing, Spontaneity and Creativity Training. This was his training ground for his creation later to be called 'Psychodrama'" (Speiser, 2002, p. 11). According to Robert Landy,

> Moreno clearly saw the deeper representational, social-psychological nature of the dramatic experience. He developed not only an early notion of improvisational drama, which he called "therapeutic theatre," but also a seminal formulation of group psychotherapy. Perhaps his most significant innovation was the application of role playing to psychotherapeutic practice. (Landy, 1994, p. 31)

Drama therapy uses theater techniques to facilitate personal growth and promote health. It is one of the expressive therapies that is used in a variety of settings.

> The use of dramatic process and theater as a therapeutic intervention began with Psychodrama. The field has expanded to allow many forms of theatrical interventions as therapy[,] including role-play, theater games, group-dynamic games, mime, puppetry, and other improvisational techniques. (Wikipedia, 2007, p. 1)

The National Association for Drama Therapy was founded in 1979 and is internationally recognized along with the American Dance Therapy Association.

In this dissertation I will concentrate on the relationship between psychodrama in education for the individual actor and the role of the group audience as the witness, both in relation to some of the developmental issues that face adolescents. Many of the

techniques and innovations in this field have been influenced by Freire (1970), who writes about people actively learning by participating in the doing. He also argues that words involve a radical interaction between reflection and action and that "true words" are transformational. Human existence must be nourished by "true words," and to say the true word is to transform the world. Dialogue, the sharing of words between two people, is the way words lay claim to their meaning or significance. True dialogue cannot exist in the absence of love for the world and the people in it. In Friere's view, authentic education requires the object of action to be a reality that is transformed by people together, by the people who are together involved in the act of educating. This idea reinforces my belief in the importance of creating role plays to educate and a connected community in the schools so that true dialogue can occur and transformation or action can become possible.

Boal (1985), inspired by Freire's work, reinforces these ideas and applies them further in *Theatre of the Oppressed.* He believes that the art of looking at oneself in the tradition of political and educational theatre reinforces the importance of role plays. I have applied these ideas to the learning in wellness and prevention work I developed. According to Boal (1992), "All human beings are Actors (they act!) and Spectators (they observe!) They are Spect-Actors. Everything that actors do, we do throughout our lives, always and everywhere" (p. xxx). In Boal's work, "spectators could stop the production, enter the action, propose new points of view, enact alternative solutions, and discuss the possibilities with those still in the audience" (Rohd, p. x). Boal believes interactivity in the theatre creates a space for problem solving and practicing solutions. Rohd (1998) expands on this idea, saying, people learn from acting out or role-playing specific

situations. "This basic belief holds true for all subjects—particularly [for] what we have come to know as 'prevention education'" (Rohd, p. xvii).

Based on the Freire tradition, "Playback Theatre" (Salas, 2000) developed further the goals of community building and social healing. Playback Theatre theory proposes that

> people need stories in order to know who we are as individuals and as a society. The stories we tell of ourselves and our world crystallize and communicate social and personal self-knowledge. The connection that arises from sharing personal stories is a counterforce to isolation and alienation and given the right context, all people have the innate capacity and spontaneity to respond with empathic creativity to another person's story. (p. 290)

Mind/Body Connection

I have been exploring the development of a somatic, or kinesthetic, awareness in students, which I refer to as a "body sense" (Beardall, 2000). The body sense is a somatic awareness of "feeling, sensing, and knowing" (Cohen, 1993) that each of us holds in our body that is based on our kinesthetic senses. One's perception is influenced by what one senses physically from the body, and by what one feels as well. Gendlin (1978) refers to this as a "felt sense." Through Gendlin's technique of "focusing," one can get in touch with the body's messages and "body sense," which can then lead to a "felt shift." A "felt shift" can allow an individual to understand more clearly what was initially unclear or nagging before the "felt shift." This is often accompanied by a physical release. Gendlin's work validates the use of the expressive arts in the prevention work with the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) students. Because the expressive therapies engage the "felt sense," students can therefore be more mindful of what they are sensing

and feeling. This mindful state of being present in their body and in the moment provides internal support for knowing and attending to their physical experience.

Gendlin believes that the body has a knowing wisdom of its own and that, through "focusing," a person can reach clarity on a particular problem or question that he or she may have. If one senses that something is not right, the "felt sense" helps create a bodily release, a gut feeling or body shift, where the individual who is focusing feels, senses and knows what has just happened is right or not right. The unconscious body shares its wisdom and becomes part of the conscious body's knowing. Gendlin's (1978) "felt sense" is a bodily change or sense of release that accompanies the sudden new understanding of a previously unclear feeling. "The 'felt shift' is essentially identical to the freeing insight of the creative process" (p. xi) where an individual has an "Ah, Ha" moment. The arts are transformative in the creative process, where art can be considered as awareness, integration and action. The focusing technique follows a similar sequence to that of the awareness of the artist who has an inspiring idea.

> One effect of the focusing process is to bring hidden bits of personal knowledge up to the level of conscious awareness. This isn't the most important effect. The body shift, the change in a felt sense, is the heart of the process. But the bringing-up of bodily sensed knowledge—the "transfer" of the knowledge, in effect, from body to mind—is something that every focuser experiences. Often this transferred knowledge seems to be part of a tough problem, and it might be expected that this would make you feel worse. After all, you now know something bad that you didn't know before. Logically, you should feel worse. Yet you don't. You feel better. You feel better mainly because your body feels better, freer, released. The whole body is alive in a less constricted way. You have localized a problem that had previously made your whole body feel bad. An immediate feeling lets you know there is a body shift. It is the body having moved toward a solution. (pp. 25–26)

Gendlin describes six steps to the focusing technique. The first is to clear a space in your mind where you feel safe. The second is to select a problem to focus on. The third is to ask, "What is the 'felt sense' of this problem? Are there words or images that come from the bodily 'felt sense'?" The fourth step is the resonating, going back and forth from the "felt sense" to the word or images that emerge from the body. This process should continue until it resonates and feels right. The fifth step is to ask, "What is this problem about, or what is the worst of this, or how would I feel if this problem didn't exist? What is holding me back from understanding and releasing this problem?" The sixth and last step is to ask, "What small step could be taken toward resolving this problem?" At this point the body-shift will come, or not. If it doesn't occur at this moment, it will come later. Trusting the wisdom of one's body is part of the process.

Adler (1987, 2002), a noted dance/movement therapist, speaks of "developing witness consciousness." Using the concept of the "witness" in authentic movement, Adler speaks about "moving toward that which cannot yet be known because of committed practice grounded in what can be known as experience of conscious embodiment" (p. 235). The MVP students' role plays provide the opportunity for witnessing scenarios in connection with a group, and because of this, they can experience the process kinesthetically and emotionally together, without going through it alone. I believe that the students witnessing the MVP role plays experience what Adler calls a "conscious embodiment," and also what Gendlin might consider a "collective felt sense."

Daniel Siegel (2001), child psychiatrist and medical educator, speaks of body/mind connection by referring

> to the brain itself as an integral part of the central nervous
> system, which is fundamentally interwoven within the

whole body. Thus, though we may speak of the mind as
emanating from the neurophysiological processes of the
brain, this statement is an abbreviated way of referring to
the flow of energy and information within the brain as a
fundamental part of the functioning of the body as a whole.
(p. 70)

Role of the Active Bystander

Goleman (2006) speaks of our brains being "wired to connect" (p. 4), and speaks of how

"mirror neurons reflect back an action we observe in someone else, making us mimic that

action or have the impulse to do so" (p. 41). Goleman (2006) gives an example of riders

in the New York subway who initially ignored a man passed out on the floor, until one

person went over to assist him. Goleman describes that what followed was a number of

additional people helped the man out with food, water and getting an ambulance (p. 52).

When one person assists another by taking on the active bystander role, other witnesses

are more likely to intervene as well. Herman (1992) reinforces this idea: "[W]ithout a

supportive social environment, the bystander usually succumbs to the temptation to look

the other way" (p. 8). This is the reverse of the active bystander model. Helping another

student or being an active bystander often is mirrored (or not) when one person takes the

lead (or not). The bystander is more likely to be passive in an unsafe or unsupportive

environment. The message conveyed to the target is that what just happened is of no

consequence, sending a painful message to the target. Bullying statistics support working

with the bystander. Jeffrey (2004) says as many as 85% of students witness bullying as

the bystander and only 10% actually are active in helping out the target. Mobilizing the

bystander group of students and alerting them to the messages they send by not acting is most important.

Programs that alert students to their options as an active bystander contribute to the prevention of bullying. Applying the idea of the bystander to a school situation, where the students feel safe, supported and connected, the bystander is more likely to support the victim, or target. In terms of the MVP program in Newton, the fact that the high school students witness the scenarios together in a supportive, contained environment and interact with the actors allows for a range of emotions and dialogue to emerge. The students are able to witness together, and are able to experience a "kinesthetic sense" together, communicated through the actors' bodies. At times the students are able to experience a "collective felt sense" together, as well, through the dialogue that follows the skits, which allows them to be more individually and collectively aware.

Section Three

"Be the change that you want to see in the world."

------Gandhi

With violence so prevalent in our world today, and with so many mixed messages coming to young people from the media, Gandhi's quote reminds me that now, more than ever, change begins with each individual citizen.

Prevention Programs That Use Interactive Role Plays

This third section will review the literature on violence prevention and discuss several violence prevention programs that use interactive theatre, as well as describe the Mentors in Violence Prevention program in Newton, Massachusetts that is the subject of this dissertation study. There has been a great deal of research recently in the area of violence prevention. The number of school shootings, alone, in the United States proves the need for implementation of such programs. As recently as two weeks ago at the time of this writing, the mass murder on the campus of Virginia Tech became yet another example of the need for intervention and prevention programs on college campuses, as well as at elementary and secondary schools. The U.S. Department of Justice (2003) cites that 71% of school shooters were themselves the targets of bullying. The recent instance of violence at Virginia Tech is another example of a shooter who had been bullied and isolated himself. After the Columbine High School shootings, many states recommended that public schools implement violence prevention programs. Information from Quality Counts (2002), the annual report put out by Educational Week, examines what schools themselves are doing to improve school climate. The report "shows that 33 states now require or recommend that districts implement anti-bullying programs." Unfortunately, however, funding is not always provided.

On May 24, 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision that raised the issue of sexual harassment to one of national importance. The court held for the first time in a narrow 5-4 ruling that a school district is liable for monetary damages under Title IX

when the school district is "deliberatively indifferent" to known acts of student-on-student sexual harassment, because the school effectively prevents that student from receiving "educational opportunity or benefit." This was a wake-up call for schools to start training staff in order to protect students from being sexually harassed. "One national survey found that 83% of girls reported being sexually harassed during their high school years" (Stein, 1999, p. 12).

Long before violence against students happens at the university level on college campuses, it germinates in schoolyards—at high schools, middle schools and even elementary schools. Bullying in elementary school is harmful and can escalate to sexual harassment and dating abuse in both middle and high school if left unchecked. It is my opinion that without prevention programs to encourage awareness and develop skills and tools for dealing with harassment, sexual harassment and dating abuse, the bullying statistics will continue to escalate.

One particular type of teen violence, dating abuse is a very real issue for many students. "Between 10 and 38% of high school students have been victims of dating violence" (Halpern, Oslak, Young et al, 2001). Also reported in this journal, "among students who are currently dating, as many as 59% have experienced physical violence, and 96 % have experienced psychological or emotional abuse." According to Blake (2003), "Alcohol abuse is linked to as many as two-thirds of all sexual assaults and date rapes of teen and college students" (p. 19). The connection between alcohol abuse and sexual assault is well documented.

In the last ten years, No Child Left Behind (2001) federal legislation stipulating that schools use research-based curricula in order to qualify for federal funding has

resulted in new programs, most of them not research based, however, because this type of research is very expensive and time-consuming for educators to conduct. According to Lantieri and Patti (1996), one of the earlier well-known programs, the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP), worked with Brooklyn schools, Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) and the New York City Board of Education as a collaborative effort. They began a series of workshops for teachers on conflict resolution. The project eventually expanded to sponsoring workshops for parents, educators and administrators, and later developed a K-12 curriculum. RCCP's goals are to reduce violent behavior, establish caring school communities that value diversity, and increase academic achievement while reducing absenteeism.

A foremost bullying prevention researcher, Olweus (1993), whose studies were conducted extensively in Norway and around the world on bullying, influenced many programs that have used his research in formatting curricula in preventing bullying. Although initially he did not develop a curriculum, he did provide a guide for what prevention programs needed to include. His components included that schools must have awareness and involvement on the part of all adults in the school: teachers, administrators and school personnel, as well as parents. He also specified that schools should focus on a clear definition of bullying, and have school policies in place that reinforce and reflect this consistent message. Olweus believed that staff development and continued administrative support were essential, and that collaboration among teachers in implementing both the philosophy and the program were also core components of a successful violence prevention program. Since Olweus continues to have done the most

extensive research over the long haul (23 years) in this field, many violence prevention programs have adapted his core components in developing their own curricula.

In addition to Katz (1993, 2006) from the MVP program at Northeastern University, other leaders in violence prevention are Prothrow-Stith at Harvard School of Public Health, Slaby (1994) from Educational Development Corp (EDC), Stein (1994, 1999) from the Wellesley Centers for Women, Educators for Social Responsibility (1994) in Cambridge, and the Hazelden Foundation (2004), which has developed violence prevention programs for K-12.

Many of today's educators who study the prevention of bullying, sexual harassment and dating violence in the schools speak of the role of the bystander in helping to stop these bullying behaviors and cite research on how important it is to educate and empower the bystander (Katz, 1993; Slaby, 1994; Stein, 1994). Although there has been research conducted on violence prevention programs, I am not aware of any specific research that has looked at the development of attitude and actions of the active bystander through role plays.

In the field of prevention and determining what prevention programs should include, Lantieri and Patti (1997) speak of the risk factors that have been identified by Hawkins and Catalano (1992) for adolescents who are violent. These factors include isolation, lack of connection to friends and family and a lack of social competency and problem solving skills. This reinforces again the need for programs that focus on the social, emotional and relational development of our students.

I have looked at a number of violence prevention programs that use dramatic role-playing and interaction with audience members to help students deal with bullying,

sexual harassment and teen dating abuse. Urban Improv is one such group that uses these techniques. The Urban Improv Troupe of Boston is a professional group of adults who bring their work to the schools, performing interactive dramatic skits in order to help students see the options they have in bullying situations. According to a report in the *Boston Globe*, "An independent study by psychological researchers at the Brookline-based Trauma Center[] compared four Boston fourth-grade classrooms that went through the Urban Improv program with four that didn't, [and] found that Urban Improv had a positive effect" (Kennedy, 2005, p. D5).

Another program, ENACT, in New York City, attempts to "unwind[] resistance and externalize[] the unspoken." ENACT's mission is to assist public school students in learning social and emotional skills through drama. According to Feldman and Jones (2000),

> ENACT is an arts-in-education professional company that utilizes creative drama and drama therapy techniques to improve social and emotional learning in children and adolescents. Through creative drama techniques including role play and participatory theater games, students are offered alternatives and choices in learning new life skills. (p. 335)

Interactive Pedagogical Drama (IPD) utilizes interactive drama in a multimedia format. Describing their successful pilot research project, the program's originators explain, "We envision interactive story as a means to teach social skills, to teach math and science, to further individual development, to provide health interventions, etc." The authors and originators of the program (Marsella, Lewis, Johnson, LeBore, (2004) "place the learner in the role as passive audience instead of active learner. The goal of

Interactive Pedagogical Drama (IPD) is to exploit the edifying power of story while promoting active learning" (p. 1). The actors are puppets and the learner directs the action using the puppets. Although in my research study we use students as actors and enlist live audience participation, IPD's goals are similar to those of the MVP program in that the program also promotes active learning through dramatic scenarios using the puppets.

Canavan (2004) cites a program on the college level that comes from the University of Texas at Austin, *Activism with Heart: The Voices Against Violence Project,* which was organized by Greta Cowlagi, educational trainer of the group. Canavan explains that Cowlagi's classes demonstrate scenarios exploring sexual assault and relationship stalking on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin.

Voices Against Violence is a campus organization at UT Austin that addresses issues related to relationship violence and sexual assault. It offers support and counseling services as well as education and advocacy. As the director for outreach and training, Cowlagi's work has two components—getting the message out about resources for survivors or potential victims, and working toward risk reduction and violence prevention. (Canavan, 2004, p. 2)

Another leader in interactive theatre and violence prevention with middle, high school and college students is Rohd (1998), whose *Hope is Vital* program is based on the work of Freire and Boal. "Information is not enough. It is useless without the power to act," he says (p. xvii). In Rohd's preface he quotes Boal:

> Theatre is a language through which human beings can
> engage in active dialogue on what is important to them. It
> allows individuals to create a safe space that they may
> inhabit in groups and use to explore the interactions which

make up their lives. It is a lab for problem solving, for
seeking options, and for practicing solutions. (p. xix)

Rohd's (1998) program provides opportunities for people to create safe places, have dialogue, explore choices and consequences, practice for real life, and enhance communication and decision-making skills. The program also teaches "how self-esteem affects moments of decision, [and that we must] practice taking risks in the fictional world in order to learn" (p. xviii).

On the high school level, Donovan (2005) writes about her work with teachers and students in *The Intervention Theatre Project*. She speaks of the progression and the process of the participatory theater group she describes. The scenes are developed from the actor's real-life stories and are improvised, rehearsed and performed. "Because the scene is an imaginary construct, it provides participants with the safety to play parts that could otherwise be offensive, overwhelming, or uncomfortable" (p. 45). Donovan believes that after students have explored these roles and scenes, they will be more likely to take action in their life. She uses Boal's work as her source of inspiration and knowledge, agreeing with him that debriefing and reflecting are important after the scenes are enacted (2005). Donovan shares with the reader the thoughts that arose from the group after their process of working together for five weeks. A few of the actor's reflections are that there are always two sides to an issue, and that in order to come up with a solution, both sides must listen (Donovan, 2005, p. 43).

Eddy (1998), a Laban trained and somatic educator, believes that "skills being taught through movement include cooperation, peace-making, multicultural awareness, emotional intelligence, fair-play and social responsibility" (p. 35). Eddy's doctoral

dissertation, "The Role of Physical Activity in Educational Violence Prevention Programs for Youth," provides a detailed description and assessment of six violence prevention programs across the country. Two of the programs use interactive techniques—drama and role-playing—in helping students deal with bullying and aggressive and violent behaviors. A significant contribution of Eddy's research is her list of key teaching tactics used in successful violence prevention programs. Eddy writes

> In the estimation of the researcher, certain themes underlie all the tactics. These themes are that teachers and students exhibit caring and respect, as well as being honest and vulnerable, while allowing for students to have a voice about what they feel and think and engaging students in decision-making about their lives in and out of the classroom (p. 43).

All of the programs Eddy has researched and described shed some insight on the impact of viewing teen dating abuse scenarios on the actors and the audience members who become the bystanders in these scenarios.

As mentioned previously, MVP mentors direct lessons at the middle schools, and lead the assemblies at both the middle and high schools, using interactive instruction and role plays. Mentors work to improve the climate of Newton's secondary schools by helping students to feel safe, supported and empowered.

The audiences at the high school mentor-led assemblies view scenarios about peer pressure, harassment, homophobia, sexual harassment and dating abuse. The act of witnessing the role plays, which takes place in a theatre-in-the round setting, creates a mirror for each student to see himself or herself in, and helps students as a community recognize the red flags that signal risky behaviors and dating abuse. The audience's

experience watching the role plays heightens awareness and helps the students integrate the skills necessary to empower both actors and audience to make healthy decisions for themselves, and to support each other as active bystanders. The interactive experience allows the actors and the witnesses to feel connected to a caring community that values respect.

Role play scenarios provide students with the opportunity to act and react to specific situations, adding to their body memory and building a more complete repertory to apply and carry over to other experiences in their everyday life. Awareness that some decisions are risky also depends on intuitive and learned knowledge stored in the body. An individual's ability to sense that a specific choice can be dangerous and therefore avoided is an important resource for students in decision-making and problem solving. The final step toward personal integration is applying the skill by putting it into action. By using movement, role play scenarios and the arts as a base for developmental growth and integration, transferring and applying the learning into action, the learning cycle is complete and the new knowledge available for body and self.

The next chapter of this dissertation will discuss the methodological approach used in the program evaluation research study and will introduce several violence prevention programs previously researched and conducted by dance/movement therapists.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will begin by discussing the Mentors in Violence Prevention program (MVP), its history, mission statement and goals. I will discuss the methodological research approach, present the four components of data collection and explain how the data were analyzed. I will review the significance of each component of research in assessing the training of the mentors as well as the short- and long-term effects on students involved in the program and those who witnessed the mentor-directed dramatic scenes.

This program Evaluation Research Study investigates the implementation of several aspects of MVP at Newton North High School, some of whose current and alumni students are the subjects of this study. The knowledge gained from this study will be applied and transferred to the other Newton high school and four middle schools. The results of the study will also be shared with other communities interested in beginning similar programs.

Mentors in Violence Prevention Program

MVP is a leadership program that trains high school students to be peer mentors as well as mentors to 8th grade students in middle school. Newton's program focuses on training mentors to promote gender respect, to become aware of stereotypes in the media, to recognize qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships and to be active bystanders in preventing harassment, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse. Male and female students work together to promote gender respect and help create a caring and supportive community.

Through student-directed lessons presented to middle school students and by sponsoring MVP Days which include a number of interactive presentations at the high school including developmentally challenging role plays shown and discussed in the theatre-in-the-round to high school students, MVP works to improve the climate of all secondary schools in the city by helping students feel safe, supported and empowered through taking an active part in the MVP mission. The MVP training encourages mentors to become more mindful, empathetic and active bystanders and allies who help create welcoming, respectful environments in their own school and the broader Newton community.

MVP originated with Jackson Katz, author, educator and activist, who began the program at Northeastern University, designed for male college athletes to mentor high school athletes about men's violence against women. After hearing Katz speak at

Wellesley College in 1997, I approached him about adapting the program for high school students to mentor middle school students. I worked together with Katz and MVP trainers from Northeastern University to launch the MVP pilot program at Newton North High School in September 1998.

High school students at Newton North who are interested in being MVP mentors apply to the program, are selected and then complete 15 hours of training in learning the goals and methods of the program. MVP is funded under Safe Schools, Healthy Students, a federal grant that fulfills the federal No Child Left Behind (2001) guidelines. Each year an informal assessment of the program has been conducted by gathering feedback from middle school students, high school mentors and middle school teachers, and this information is used to improve the program. At this time in the development of the MVP program, research and evidence-based findings are needed to ensure future funding, improve the quality of the training and further strengthen the program within the school system.

Newton's MVP program provides the vessel for a pedagogy that includes the expressive arts (drama, dance/movement), violence prevention strategies and a theoretical framework of social, emotional and relational development that is integrated into training sessions for high school mentors as well as the lessons presented to the 8th grade students. The Mentors in Violence Prevention Program at Newton North High School is the subject of this program evaluation study.

Introduction to the Research Study

This program evaluation study will help to clarify what is working and what needs more attention to ensure continued program success while focusing on the quality of program implementation. One of the components of this research study investigates the perceived behavioral changes of the high school students who serve as MVP mentors as well as those who witness the dramatic scenarios, which depict developmentally challenging situations regarding harassment, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse. The topics of scenarios used in the role plays vary and are chosen by the students. One role play might focus on issues such as peer pressure, loss of judgment under the influence of alcohol, or lack of consent in a sexual situation and the role of the bystander. Another role play might focus on put-downs, rumors and homophobia and their role in creating a hostile environment. The scenarios are performed by the MVP mentors, witnessed by other students and discussed in a theatre-in-the round presentation model. The act of witnessing the role plays can create a mirror for each student to see him- or herself and also can help students to become more mindful in recognizing the 'red flags" that lead to risky behaviors and dating abuse. The mentor actors encourage their peers to give suggestions for intervening as a bystander, which the actors then try out in different scenarios, providing multiple perspectives on intervention strategies. This program evaluation study will help to investigate the training of the mentors and the self-reported perceived changes in respondents' behavior after viewing and processing the role plays on MVP Day.

Rationale for the Program Evaluation Research Study

In the last ten years our schools have seen increased violence as demonstrated by the sporadic, though continuing, tragic school shootings in the United States. Nationally, violence of a lesser magnitude occurs daily in our schools, however, and involves bullying, cyberbullying, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse. On a state level, the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) (2005) reports, "Ten percent of all high school students have experienced violence in a dating relationship, 5% reporting being hurt physically. Ten percent of students report experiencing sexual contact against their will, and twenty-five percent of high school students report being bullied in the last year." The results of Newton's YRBS for 2006–2007 have not yet been published, but the Newton Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2004–2005 results show that 5% of Newton North and South High School students report being sexually abused by a date or someone they were going out with. In addition, 5% of Newton high school students report being physically abused by a date or someone they were going out with. Thirty-three percent of Newton middle school (Day, Bigelow, Brown, Oak Hill) students report being bullied or harassed in school 30 days prior to the survey, while 20% of Newton High school students report being bullied or harassed in school 30 days prior to the survey.

The comprehensive health program at the middle school level in Newton is present at all four middle schools. The MVP high school mentoring program provides a bridge that connects the middle schools to the high schools in establishing consistent messages regarding harassment, sexual harassment and dating abuse. There are

comprehensive wellness and prevention programs in schools throughout our country that focus on social and emotional development to help students acquire skills they need to support themselves throughout their adolescent development. Goleman (2006) speaks of a meta-analysis of more than one hundred studies that state "the best social and emotional programs are designed to fit seamlessly into the standard school curriculum for children at every age" (p. 284).

My own experience has been that a mentoring program is more accessible and in fact more successful than the teacher-lecturing-to-students approach. Mentoring programs have been studied and researchers have demonstrated that the programs help both mentors and mentees in integrating their learning (Karcher, 2005). Audience members interacting with actors in psychodrama role plays designed to help students learn about health and wellness strategies have been cited as effective by the Center for Disease Control Adolescent Study (2003). Interactivity in the theatre creates a space for problem solving and practicing solutions (Boal, 1985). Students witnessing role plays can feel empathy and connection with each other and realize they are not alone.

Research studies support findings that students who feel safe and connected while in school not only achieve academically but also are at less risk for substance abuse, teen pregnancy and violent and deviant behavior (Bosworth, 2002). Olweus' (1993) research suggests the importance of intervention in the prevention of bullying at all grade levels. He also stresses four areas to develop for successful prevention programs, which, he says, include staff development; the creation, communication and implementation of consistent school-wide rules, administration policy and support and awareness and involvement on the part of all the adults in the school.

When prevention programs are not in place, students are at greater risk for drug and alcohol abuse, delinquency and violent and abusive behavior (Mihalic, Irwin, Elliott, Fagan, Hansen, 2001). Disconnection that results from being bullied or from being excluded (by an individual or a group), along with a lack of social competency and problem-solving skills, are cited as causes of students becoming perpetuators of violence (Hawkins, Catalano, 1992). I believe that comprehensive K-12 wellness and prevention programs supported by school administrations that value and are committed to the social, emotional and relational needs of students offer the most hope for the success of school-based violence prevention programs.

Prior Research Studies of School-Based Violence Prevention Programs (SBVPP)

The following is a brief review of the methodological approaches used by three dance/movement therapist's teams who have conducted research studies in the area of school-based violence prevention programs. The first research study was developed by Kornblum (2006) from the Hancock Center for Movement Arts in Madison, Wisconsin, and Hervey (2006) from Columbia College in Chicago collaborated in evaluating Kornblum's *Disarming the Playground*, an elementary school curriculum, with second grade students.

Kornblum was hired as an outside consultant by the school to conduct a staff development workshop and to teach bullying prevention classes during the school day. Drawing a connection between the administrative backing and the success of their program, Kornblum and Hervey point out that "it is important to note that the school

system was extremely supportive of this curriculum and Kornblum's work in the school" (p. 119). Kornblum and Hervey used both qualitative (interviews, writings, and drawings of students) and quantitative (Behavior Rating Index for Children (BRIC), BRIC instrument completed by teachers both pre- and post exposure to the curriculum) methods in their research study (Kornblum, 2006). Two of the measures Kornblum and Hervey point to as evidence of the success of their program are students' demonstrating both "more effective emotional self-regulation and increased non-verbal attunement and empathy" (p.127).

In the second study, Koshland and Wittaker (2004) conducted a research study on the effectiveness of another methodological approach, PEACE, "a 12-week dance/movement therapy based violence-prevention program designed to provide skills of self-control for decreasing aggressive incidents and disruptive behaviors at an urban elementary school in the Southwest" (p. 72). The program was administered to two first grade classes, one second grade class and two third grade classes. Koshland, who had been hired as a consultant, taught the classes herself. Quantitative methods were used (pre- and post-Student Response Form) along with teacher observations and students' anecdotal comments. Koshland and Wittaker, like Kornblum and Hervey, also found success with their methodological approach and wrote, "The results of this pilot study evaluating the effectiveness of a dance/movement therapy violence prevention program revealed statistically significant decreases in aggression and problem behaviors" (p. 86).

In the third study Eddy (1998) toured the country and researched six different violence prevention programs, which she recorded in her dissertation entitled, *The Role of Physical Activity in Educational Violence Prevention Program for Youth*. The settings of

programs she observed included one suburban middle school, four urban public after-school programs, and one urban public high school. Eddy (1999) explains that "the goal of [her] investigation was to describe features of school and agency-based educational violence prevention programs that are 'physical activity-based.' It also sought to learn about how these programs are perceived by the teachers and administrators who are directly involved with them" (p. 6). Eddy (1998) used a qualitative methodological approach incorporating interviews, observations and document analysis. The documents she employed consisted of curricula, class plans and school philosophies, when they existed (p. 87). Eddy's research did not include qualitative or quantitative data results of the six violence prevention programs other than as noted in the personal assessment provided by the teacher/leaders and Eddy's own observations.

Evaluation Research

Dance/movement therapist Cruz (2004), in her chapter entitled, "What is Evaluation Research?" speaks of evaluation research establishing a process for exploring a question while at the same time involving and analyzing other components of a program. "The purpose of evaluation is to produce findings that assist in making judgments about the merits of a program for informing decision making and policy" (p. 171). Cruz also speaks of evaluation research studies as having the opportunity to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods (p. 173).

MVP Evaluation Research Study

This program evaluation study will focus on the high school MVP program as a means of creating more mindful, empathetic and active bystanders and examine the four components of data. The valuable feedback that has been collected thus far: 1) the training of the mentors, 2) the feedback from the 8th grade teachers whose classes the mentors taught 3) the level of students' self-reporting about their awareness after they have witnessed the role plays during MVP Day regarding harassment, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse. 4) The retrospective view of the alumni mentors will also be discussed. This evaluation study will also contribute to the development and implementation of an action plan for meeting the challenges necessary to further develop the program and strengthen its position within the high school and Newton community.

Methodological Approach of This Study

After reviewing the previously mentioned SBVPP research studies that utilized dance/movement therapy, along with action research studies used primarily in education written about by Sagor (2000) and Cruz and Berrol's (2004) guide for dance/movement therapists in developing research options, I believe that the program evaluation research study is the most appropriate strategy for evaluating the project I describe in this paper.

My study focuses on several aspects of the Mentors in Violence Prevention program at Newton North High School. With many competing needs for limited financial resources, it was my intention to use evaluation research to establish a process for

reviewing aspects of the MVP program so as to also insure future funding. This study

will include the following elements: 1) a review and assessment of the Newton MVP high

school students' experience of being trained as mentors; 2) share the middle school

teachers comments about the student mentors presentations in the middle schools; 3) a

report on the feedback collected from students who attended MVP Day regarding their

perceived behavioral changes; 4) share the retrospective views of six alumni mentors.

From the data collected I will present an action plan for future development of the MVP

program.

Sharing my findings with administrators, faculty, staff and students is an

important part of this evaluation process. Communicating and summarizing the data

collected to these groups will focus attention on different aspects of the MVP program

(training, MVP Day, retrospective experience in MVP) in order to describe as clearly as

possible for school personnel and community members the goals of the program, its

merits, its challenges and where it must to be supported in order for further growth and

change to take place. My intention is that the program evaluation study facilitates such a

process.

In this study both qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized. Interviews of

alumni MVP leaders were conducted and their retrospective reflections were recorded,

coded and analyzed along with questionnaires completed by the middle school teachers

involved in the program. The interviews of the students and feedback comments of the

teachers provide qualitative data. Pre and post questionnaires filled out by the mentors

before and after their training, and feedback questionnaires completed by those students

attending MVP Day who witnessed the role plays and activities, constitute quantitative data used in this evaluation program research study.

Due to No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation requiring that federally funded violence prevention programs be research based, I believe it is important to use both qualitative and quantitative data in this study, thus laying the groundwork for obtaining future funding to continue research studies on this issue. In order for the MVP program to be considered for the federal government's "approved status list," which would allow schools throughout the country to use this model and receive funding, the program must meet the criteria set by U.S. Department of Justice's in *Blueprints for Violence Prevention* (2001). The criteria in the report require "evidence of deterrent effect when using a strong research design, sustained effects and multiple site replication" (Mihalic, Irwin, Elliott, Fagen, Hansen, p.2). I believe this MVP program evaluation study as it is constructed meets the Department of Justice's first two criteria listed above and will be an initial step in helping to safeguard future federal funding to continue research of the MVP program.

In order to achieve the goals of my program evaluation study, I have employed *Triangulation,* a method of using intersecting modes of data collection. If data are received from different sources, the scope and depth of the research are enriched (Glesne, 1999). According to Cresswell (1998), "In triangulation, researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence (p. 202). The sources of data in this study include interviews with alumni student mentors, questionnaires completed at two separate times (pre- and post-)

regarding the training of mentors and feedback from students who witnessed role plays and reflections from middle school teachers involved in the program.

Principal Investigator

As the coordinator/teacher of the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program, I am both researcher and participant observer of this program evaluation research study. Data collection and methods of analysis have been directed toward evaluating the training of the mentors and determining the short- and long-term effects on the student participants in the MVP program, including how the program may have increased their awareness, mindfulness, empathy and their role as an active bystander. My connection with the students as one of the advisors of the MVP program is advantageous since I have taught many of the mentors when they were in the middle school and, therefore, I am someone they can trust and feel secure with. Since I am a member of the faculty at Newton North high school and have taught on the middle school level in the city, my connections with administrators, teachers and students is helpful in facilitating this research process. A limitation of my being principal investigator is my bias due to my role as coordinator and teacher of the MVP program.

Preliminary Research Questions

This Program Evaluation Research Study provides the opportunity to research students' awareness, mindfulness, anticipated behavior changes and bystander engagement through

participation in the MVP program. My hypothesis is that participation in the MVP program increases both awareness and mindfulness, and affects bystander behavior and actions when witnessing physical harassment, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse.

The specific research questions for this study are:

• Will participating in the MVP training by portraying and/or witnessing role plays about dating violence influence and empower MVP members to be more aware and mindful, and will it influence mentors to actively intervene as bystanders in situations of gender disrespect and/or dating violence?

• Does creating, witnessing and processing student role plays help MVP mentors and audience members integrate MVP's messages about harassment, sexual harassment and dating abuse, and does it help facilitate the transfer of knowledge into action?

The Four Components of Data Collection

As stated previously, data collection for this study is divided into four components that include 1) pre- and post questionnaires completed by MVP mentors addressing their training experience, 2) questionnaires completed by middle school teachers present in the classroom when the mentors visit the middle schools, 3) feedback questionnaires completed by Newton North High School students attending MVP Day, and 4) interviews of alumni MVP mentors seeking their retrospective view of their involvement in the program.

The program evaluation research study began in October 2005 and was completed in February, 2007. All necessary forms were distributed, communications delivered,

permission requests obtained and protocol followed for conducting research in the Newton Public Schools. Dr. Carolyn Wyatt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, granted the approval for this research study (see Appendix F). In addition, the documentation was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Lesley University.

1. Pre and post questionnaires regarding the mentors' training

This study relies on data collected from four different aspects of the MVP program. The first aspect of the data collected for the program evaluation research study is from the pre and post questionnaires of the high school mentors' training experience.

The training experience includes reading materials relevant to bullying, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse, and engaging in partnering, dialogue, small group activities and large group discussions. The interactive activities, which regard homophobia, healthy/unhealthy relationships and media stereotypes, provide an opportunity for the mentors to interact with each other about the material they have read.

In addition, student mentors participate in a number of cooperative movement games encouraging team building, leadership and empathy. Meditation and visualizations are used to assist students in knowing how they feel about the bystander role and how they may already have been affected in their own lives in the areas of bullying, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse. The training is designed to help the mentors become knowledgeable about MVP's goals, understand their own growing edge in the learning process, feel part of a connected group and practice knowing, expressing and speaking about the issues related to MVP that confront students. The mentors experience, discuss

and reflect upon exercises that encourage each to become clearer as to what their beliefs and opinions are in relation to MVP's goals. Mentors learn key terms and concepts and discuss their individual positions with each other. The mentors also share why they joined the program and what their experience was like in middle school. These discussions with one another help prepare the mentors for speaking with the middle school students.

Mentor training takes place over two days in the fall with a month between each training date. After the two-day training, the mentors meet during X block (the last block of the day on Thursday) every other week to prepare their lessons and practice and process their experience with each other before visiting the middle schools. They go over teaching tips and understanding classroom group dynamics as part of the training and discussion before putting what they've learned into action.

Before and after their training, mentors filled out pre and post questionnaires, the first component of my data collection. I collaborated with researchers at Northeastern University in developing these questionnaires, aiming to seek data about changes in awareness and behavior before and after the MVP training. The questionnaires are divided into three parts (see Appendix A). All three parts use the five-point Likert scale. These surveys were administered to the trainees at Newton North high school in the fall of 2005 and were completed anonymously, with only the student's gender being recorded.

In the first section of the questionnaire (9 questions) the mentors are asked to answer questions concerning what the "average" high school student at their high school might think about harassment, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse. A student cannot accurately respond for another student. Therefore, the questions in the first section are not

valid and will not be evaluated. The second section of the questionnaire (8 questions) focuses on the mentors' feelings concerning prevention, such as whether it is hard to prevent sexual harassment and dating abuse in high school. The third section of the questionnaire (6 questions) is about the mentors' perception of being involved in MVP and how they perceive others see them in their role as mentor.

These questionnaires were administered to 68 students before the 15-hour MVP training began and then again after its completion. There was an approximately four-week gap between the two training days, which occurred during the fall of 2005.

2. Middle School Teacher Questionnaire

The second component of the data collected for the program evaluation study was questionnaires completed by middle school teachers. These teachers acted as allies to the mentors in their classroom and observed them when the student mentors were teaching their lessons to the middle school students. The teachers completed questionnaires that were provided to them at the two middle schools where the Newton North MVP students taught their homeroom students. All eighteen teachers responded to the five questions posed. Their responses to the first three questions were reviewed and recorded as these were the only questions relevant to the high school students and their presentations. Since the middle school teachers were present when the mentors were working with the middle school students, their input was important for giving feedback to the mentors and to the program as a whole. The teachers' suggestions for how to better communicate the

objectives of the program and improve the mentors' training were invaluable. The teacher questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

3. MVP Day Questionnaire (Feedback Form)

The third component of the data collected was posttest questionnaires completed by all students who attended MVP Day (February 13, 2007) at Newton North. The feedback form used for students and accompanying instructions for teachers can be found in Appendix C. I designed the feedback sheet with Michele Cummins and Dana Debernardo from SSRE (Social Science Research and Evaluation, Inc.), and these surveys were filled out anonymously. Students recorded their grade, gender and birth date, and whether they were an MVP mentor or audience participant. This information can now help in sorting the data according to grade and gender and in comparing the results of the mentors with that of the student body at large—at least those who participated in MVP Day.

Newton North High School has approximately 1800 students. The enrichment coordinator for the school sent out the notices announcing MVP Day and organized the seating at the events. She shared with me that all blocks that included role plays were reserved and filled up by the next day. This clearly demonstrated openness on the part of the teachers to participate with their students.

MVP Day role plays concerning peer pressure, dating abuse, homophobia and role of the bystander, along with a student speakout and a "clothesline" display of statistics and available resource were scheduled all day in the Little Theatre and the Film Lecture Hall. The schedule for MVP Day can be found in Appendix E. The teachers who

brought their students to MVP Day at Newton North administered a short posttest two days following MVP Day, rather than the following day, due to a snowstorm that caused the school to be closed The purpose of the posttest feedback sheet was to focus on the role plays that had been performed and the perceptions of the audience regarding their awareness, behavior and personal intervention before and after the MVP Day presentations, dialogues and reflection.

4. Interviews of Alumni MVP Mentors

The fourth and last component of the data collected was the interviews conducted by the principal investigator of six alumni mentors of the program. These interviews recorded their retrospective views of the program and their involvement and process over time. Most of the students become mentors during their sophomore year of high school and were part of the program until high school graduation. There were 3 males and 3 females, one male graduated in 2000, one female graduated in 2003, one male graduated in 2004, one female in 2005 and one female and one male graduated in 2006. All six alumni were in college at the time of the interviews, which took place in December 2006 and January 2007. The interviews were videotaped, transcribed and coded in order to reveal recurring themes among the interviewees. Their voices were important in helping to hear their views on their three-year involvement in the program.

The interviews with the alumni mentors provided data about the students' process, attitudes, concerns and motivation when they were involved in the MVP program and, more recently, in their current life. Interviews were conducted as one way of learning about students' perceived behavioral changes, including bystander action and integration

of the MVP messages during participation in the MVP program and beyond. The

rationale for these interviews is that valuable insight is often gleaned over time rather

than in the moment of direct involvement. The alumni interview questions may be found

in Appendix D.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations of the study must be highlighted:

• As coordinator of MVP, I am also the principal investigator of this study, and may be

biased despite efforts at objectivity.

• The term "average student" used in the first section of the pre and post questionnaires

cannot be measured accurately and, therefore, results from this section of the

questionnaires will not be included in this study.

• There were no control groups used in either the pre and post questionnaire design or the

posttest design. The questionnaires were given to the mentor participants of the program

during their training and to those students participating and observing in MVP Day.

• A challenge of the pre and post questionnaire design is that the tests were administered

very close together in time, before the training and after the training, with only about four

weeks in between. Short intervals are usually limited to assessing knowledge change,

whereas measuring behavioral change often requires longer duration between tests.

• The students trained in this program were also students who choose to be involved, and

were selected only after completing a series of questions stating their interest, why they

wanted to be part of MVP and what they felt they could offer. One might say that the

MVP students were already biased toward the program before they experienced the

training. Possibly, another questionnaire given at the end of the year allowing more time for students to integrate the material would have provided more information regarding perceived changes of attitudes and behaviors over a longer period of time.

• The alumni interviewed were from a selected group of twenty former mentors who graduated from the high school between six months to five-and-a-half years ago. Of the twenty former mentors, six were interviewed based on when they were available to be interviewed. This is a small sample and may not represent the entire group of alumni mentors.

• This study was conducted using one high school. What was learned from the research will be applied in the future to both high schools in the city of Newton. Multiple site-replication was not part of this study, possibly affecting the validity and reliability of transferring what was learned to sites in other communities.

Methods of Data Analysis

The pre and post questionnaires completed by the mentors after their training have been tabulated to compare the pre and post results from before and after the MVP training. The MVP Day posttest questionnaire (feedback sheet) was also tabulated. This completed information is found in Chapter IV of this dissertation. According to Cruz (2004), "Evaluations can be cross-section or longitudinal in design, meaning that data can be collected at a single instance to offer a snapshot to the program, or gathered over several time periods to give a more complete view of the development or change over time" (p.

173). I have utilized both designs, that is, observations over time and at a single instance, to cover a range of possibilities in creating an evaluation and implementation plan.

The qualitative data (mentor student interviews) were analyzed using narrative analysis and by categorizing information, data and evidence. This type of data analysis requires the researcher to explain the collected data (themes, reflections) as well as alternative explanations for a student's change in behavior. Data were coded according to emerging themes from the reflections of the students' interviewed. Table 7, showing the themes from the student interviews, can be found in the Research Findings section of this dissertation. Delamont (2002) offers basic guidelines to follow when analyzing data, which I have chosen to use as well. "Don't let the data accumulate without analysis; generate themes as you go along; code your data; stop and think as you proceed; write down your decisions; read; and enjoy" (p. 171–172).

The teachers' responses to the first three questions on the questionnaires they filled out, also categorized as qualitative data, were listed and categorized according to common themes. Figures 1, 2, and 3 list these topic areas and are found in the following chapter of the dissertation.

Significance of This Research Study

It was not incidental that I chose to use a type of pedagogy that employs movement and drama. According to Marsella, Lewis, Johnson and LaBore (2004), "The use of drama as a pedagogical tool is a constant across cultures and across history" (p. 1). Around the world, psychodrama and role plays are used with students to heighten awareness, help

change attitudes and promote positive behaviors and decision making that support the health and well being of adolescents.

As for the efficacy of using evidence-based programming, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2004) reports that "successful programming is evidence based; because problems are connected, solutions must be connected as well; strong political leadership is needed; and young people must be involved" (p. 3). Researching Newton North High School's MVP program and sharing the findings will be helpful to other programs that involve young people in leadership and mentoring roles. Concern for adolescent health spans the globe. The sharing of best practices and evidence-based research in the areas of adolescent development benefits adolescents everywhere, and the interface between expressive arts therapies and education has much to offer communities throughout the world.

Recently, David Driscoll, Commissioner of Education in Massachusetts, commented in an interview with the *Boston Globe,* "We must motivate students so they're not learning out of fear, but out of a thirst for knowledge" . . . and we must "pay[] more attention to students' social, emotional and physical needs" (Jan, 2006, p. B2). In Massachusetts, much time, energy and money have been dedicated to the MCAS tests (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Scale). Consequently, the social, emotional, artistic and physical needs of our students have been relegated to the background of public education priorities. The educational administrators from the National Association of Secondary Principals (1996), mentioned in order to prepare students for the 21st century, certain goals are relevant to students' social and emotional learning: the acquisition of essential knowledge integrating it into real life, the provision of learning

environments that are inclusive and the opportunity to have leadership experiences. The administrators stress that students enrich a high school and should therefore be provided with valuable experiences for leadership roles within the community.

Building school communities where students feel safe, feel that they belong and are respected and part of the learning community is essential for students' overall development. It affects not only how they feel about themselves, but the decisions they make, their relationships and their academic performance. The timing is right to research and analyze a leadership program that encourages the social, emotional and relational development of our students. The Mentors in Violence Prevention Program in Newton is a model program that should be shared with other communities. Completing this study will be one further step toward reaching this goal as well as that of educating school communities and the public about the importance of the interface between education and the expressive therapies. The uniqueness of this program is a process-oriented approach that involves a pedagogy that reflects a creative educational process along with a creative arts process that involves the body, drama and movement and the creative process within relational cultural theory. It is at this point that the expressive therapies and education meet.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter of the dissertation presents the results of the data gathered in the MVP program evaluation study. The topic components include: 1) pre and post questionnaires filled out by the MVP mentors' regarding their training experience, 2) questionnaires filled out by the middle school teachers whose students participated in the MVP program, 3) posttest feedback forms from MVP Day and 4) MVP alumni interviews.

The research findings will be presented in narrative form along with tables and figures highlighting themes that emerged from the MVP alumni interviews and teacher responses. Statistical information from the pre and post questionnaires regarding the MVP training and posttest feedback forms from MVP Day will be presented. A summative evaluation of each component of the data collected will also be included.

Questionnaires Given to MVP Mentors Pre- and Post-Training

Pretest and posttest research questionnaires were given to the students who were trained in the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program at Newton North High School. The pretest and posttest design is used often because it allows a baseline to be established indicating where the group began, and gives an end point as well. It is noteworthy that the

results from the pre and post questionnaire of Sections 2 and 3 (Table 1) move in a

positive direction.

Table 1, Section 2 is set below, followed by Table 1, Section 3.

Table I
Section 2

Questions	Likert Scale	Pre-test %	Pretest Mean	Post-test %	Posttest Mean	Mean Difference	Significance
It is hard to prevent sexual harassment and violence in high school.	I	8		10			
	2	48		48			
	3	21		16			
	4	18		14			
	5	5		12			
			2.64		2.70	.059	.756
I find it confusing to decide what is harassing and non-harassing behavior among high school students.	1	0		0			
	2	23		16			
	3	33		26			
	4	42		46			
	5	2		12			
			3.23		3.54	.309	.039
I find it confusing to decide what is abusive and non-abusive dating behavior.	1	2		0			
	2	6		10			
	3	10		13			
	4	66		56			
	5	16		21			
			3.88		3.88	.002	.112

1=Not Preferred, 5=Preferred

I would not be able to stop someone I did not know well from sexually harassing his girlfriend in high school.	1	3		1		
	2	28		19		
	3	26		16		
	4	35		51		
	5	7		13		
			3.16		3.55	.389	.025

I feel comfortable confronting a male friend about his sexist behavior.	1	0		1		
	2	13		3		
	3	13		13		
	4	57		45		
	5	16		38		
			3.76		4.14	.380	.012

I would not know how to support a female friend who is in an abusive relationship.	1	0		1		
	2	3		1		
	3	22		7		
	4	57		55		
	5	18		35		
			3.90		4.20	.306	.017

If there were a group of boys harassing a girl and I did not know any of them very well, it would make things worse if I tried to stop them.	1	4		1		
	2	22		9		
	3	31		39		
	4	37		42		
	5	6		9		
			3.18		3.48	.302	.056

I would hate to be called a 'wimp', 'nerd', or a 'goody-goody' for trying to stop sexually harassing behavior in high school and therefore would not intervene.	1	1		1		
	2	10		7		
	3	18		3		
	4	49		58		
	5	22		30		
			3.79		4.09	.293	.063

Table 1
Section 3

Questions	Likert Scale	Pretest %	Pretest Mean	Posttest %	Posttest Mean	Mean Difference	Significance
My male friends who know I am in the MVP program think I am a "wimp," "nerd," or a "goody-goody."	1	1		1			
	2	3		3			
	3	13		1			
	4	32		38			
	5	50		56			
			4.26		4.44	.176	.231
Being in the MVP program will be viewed positively by my female friends.	1	0		1			
	2	3		2			
	3	31		21			
	4	41		46			
	5	25		29			
			3.88		3.99	.103	.480
Being in the MVP program will decrease my chances of dating.	1	0		0			
	2	0		0			
	3	7		1			
	4	46		38			
	5	47		60			
			4.40		4.59	.191	.056
My family is very supportive about me being in the MVP program.	1	1		1			
	2	0		0			
	3	12		16			
	4	35		29			
	5	51		53			
			4.35		4.32	-.029	.837

As an MVP leader, I will gain leadership skills that will be useful in life.	1	0	0			
	2	0	0			
	3	3	0			
	4	44	41			
	5	54	59			
			4.50	4.59	.088	.332
I believe that being an MVP mentor helps to clarify my beliefs around sexual harassment.	1	0	0			
	2	1	0			
	3	9	6			
	4	56	41			
	5	34	59			
			4.22	4.38	.162	.139

The questionnaire was adapted from a survey used by Northeastern University that was redesigned to meet the goals and developmental issues of the high school students. The respondents were the students who had been accepted into the MVP program. In Section 2 of the form (Table 1) where the mentors were asked to focus on their personal feelings about prevention, all responses moved in a positive direction. In Section 3, regarding the mentors' perception of the MVP program, the numbers also moved in a positive direction.

The pretest and posttest design presented a unique challenge because they were given so close together in time. It might not be realistic to expect to see any substantive change in behaviors indicated by the instrument. Short intervals are usually limited to assessing knowledge change; measurement of the impact of an experience on attitudes and behaviors often requires a longer duration between tests. In retrospect, the posttest could have been given after the mentors went to the middle schools. This would have

allowed them a fuller experience with the program and six months' time between the pre-
and the posttests.

I believe the positive movement in direction seen in Section 2 and Section 3 is
important. Taking into account the limitations mentioned, the table points to growth and
change in relation to the questions asked, which are important indications of the mentors'
training process.

Middle School Teachers Questionnaires

Eighteen middle school teachers completed the questionnaires. Their comments to the
three questions are located in Appendix B. The questions from their questionnaires that
were coded and summarized are:

• Do you feel the high school students were prepared in knowing and

understanding the MVP curriculum? Explain.

• What are the strengths of the MVP program as you see it?

• What were the challenges of the MVP program as it was presented in your

class?

In assessing the teachers' comments the following patterns were noted and are
reflected in Figures 1, 2, and 3. In question 1 (Figure 1), the middle school teachers felt
the high school mentors were adequately prepared when visiting the middle school
classes. However, the teachers offered the following observations for possible revisions
of future trainings: not all mentors in a classroom actively participated; not all mentors
were completely comfortable with the material; mentors should not lecture to the 8th

graders. The teachers mentioned that the group dynamic of the mentors presenting in each class is most important and must be balanced based on ability, communication style and skills.

In question 2 (Figure 2), the majority of middle school teachers felt the 8th graders gained a positive experience in their interaction with the high school students. The high school students were seen as positive role models. This was repeatedly mentioned as a strong outcome of the MVP program. The middle school teachers felt that the program provided a positive experience for both groups. The teachers mentioned that the high school students introduced important and challenging issues that provided the teachers with material that they could follow up on with the students at a later time. They felt the high school students developed increased confidence in themselves in relating to and teaching the younger students.

Question 3 themes as shown in Figure 3 provided more information and offered suggestions to further improve the training of the mentors and, as a consequence, improve and deepen the experience for middle schools students. The teachers felt the role plays were a very effective tool for communicating MVP's messages. Teachers wanted MVP leaders to review the gender stereotypes activity in the 8th grade training to determine whether or not the message was clear for the students. The middle school teachers suggested they separate the genders so that more comfortable conversation could take place. They suggested more time be devoted to training the mentors in teaching and classroom management strategies, such as training in and suggestions for how to deal with a group that is quiet, or that makes inappropriate comments, or practice in allowing "wait-time" for the 8th graders to respond. The middle school teachers also suggested

more interactive activities for middle school students in order to engage as many students as possible. Adding an extra session was suggested so that all the material could be covered easily. The teachers also mentioned the importance of group dynamic chemistry among the presenters for success in reaching the students in an 8th grade class.

The recurring themes from the teachers' questionnaires are located in Figures 1, 2, and 3. This information provides invaluable insight into how to strengthen the MVP training of mentors and as well as suggestions for how to improve the middle school classes. Including the voices of the middle school teachers helps them to recognize how important their involvement is in the program.

Figure 1
Teacher Responses—Recurring Themes in Question 1

Do you feel the high school students were prepared in knowing and understanding the MVP curriculum?

☐ comments on presentation evaluation
☐ comments on improving training
☐ other comments
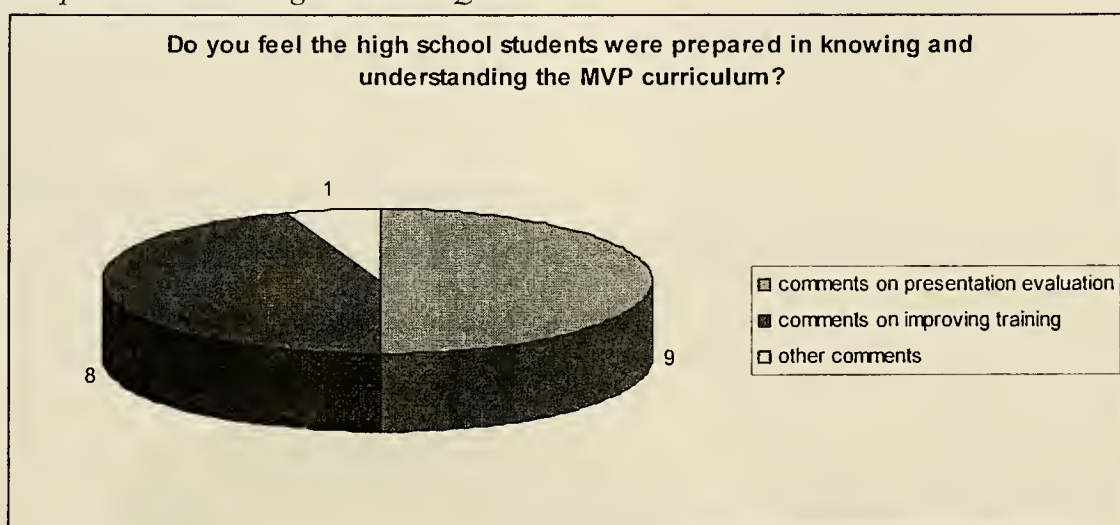
Figure 2
Teacher Responses—Recurring Themes in Question 2

What are the strengths of the MVP program as you see it?

- comments on High School Students being Positive Role Models
- Bring Up Important and Difficult Issues
- other comments
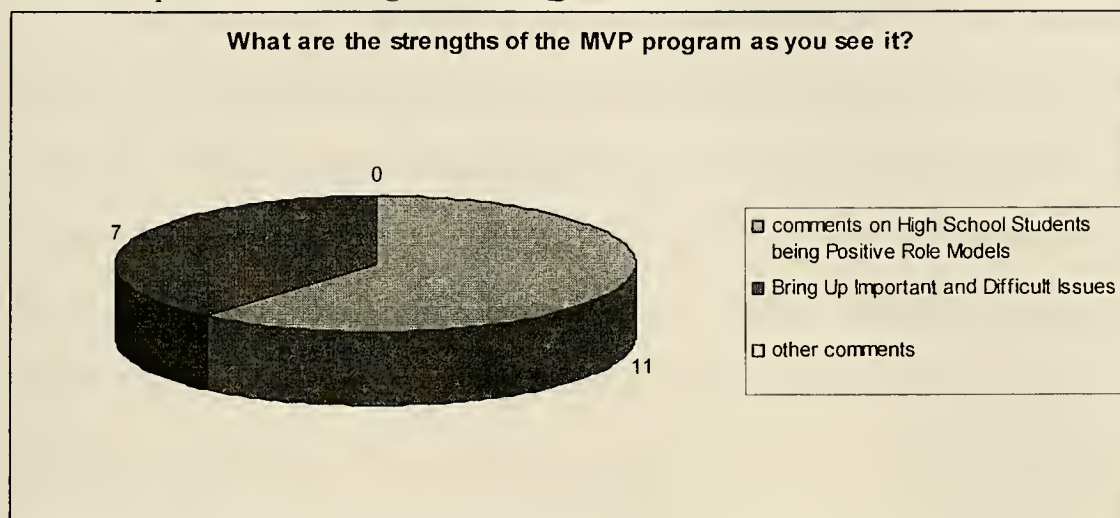
Figure 3
Teacher Responses-Recurring Themes in Question 3

What were the challenges of the MVP program as it was presented in your class?

- comments on improving the mentor's training
- other comments
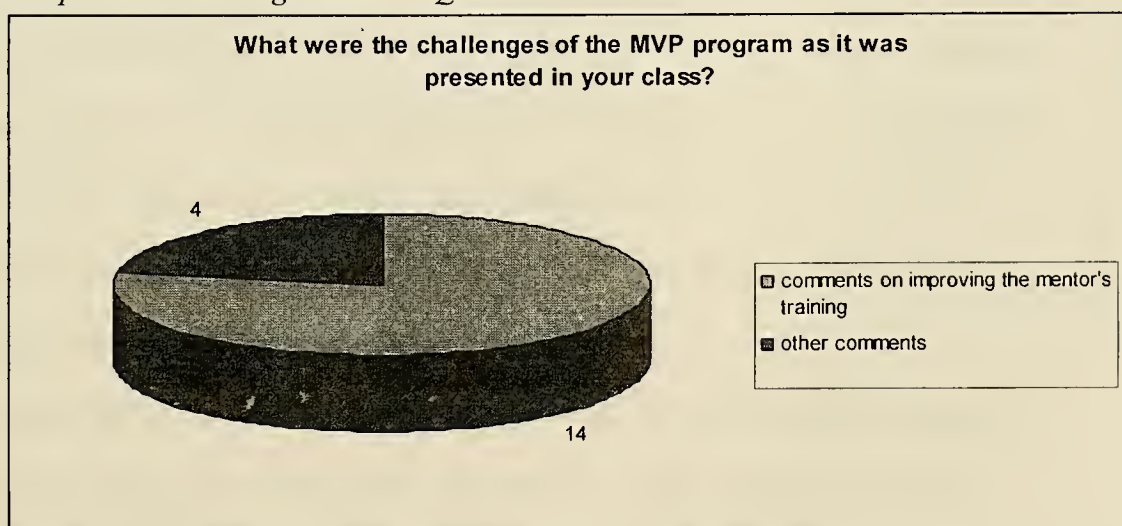
MVP Day Questionnaire (Feedback Form)

The MVP feedback survey was a posttest instrument derived from the goals and context of the day using a five-point Likert scale. One open-ended question appeared at the end of the survey. The only students completing the survey were those who attended MVP Day at Newton North High School (February 13, 2007). The posttest survey assumes the respondent is aware of their behavior prior to MVP Day. Students are asked to reflect on what they thought or did as active bystanders before witnessing the role plays. The difference measures their perceived ability to connect to what they experienced and self report about possible changes in awareness and behavior.

Four hundred eighty-seven student surveys were tabulated. The surveys were filled out anonymously, although students recorded their grade, gender, birth date and whether or not they were an MVP mentor. This information was later used in making comparisons between response differences based on these factors.

The feedback questions for MVP Day were carefully written to measure specific responses to the role plays and presentations. Michele Cummins, Debra Debernardo from Social Sciences Research and Evaluation, Inc. (SSRE) and I worked collaboratively to create questions and feedback instrument that reflect the role plays and activities presented on MVP Day. Tables 2-6 were prepared by SSRE.

Of the 487 students, 229 were male and 258 were female. The gender and grade breakdown are listed below. The higher percentage of students attending in 9th and 10th grade could reflect an attitude on the teachers' part that in 11th and 12th grade, time out

from class is not as possible due to the requirements of AP (Advanced Placement) classes and college admission.

Table 2
Respondents

	Male	Female	9th	10th	11th	12th
			Respondents			
Number	229	258	149	142	96	100
Percent	47.0	53.0	30.6	29.2	19.7	20.5

There were eight different sessions presented on MVP Day that incorporated six different events (two events were repeated twice during the day). MVP Day covered a range of topics significant in creating a safe and respectful community. These topics included the identification of "red flags" signaling potential dating abuse, such as alcohol abuse and non-consent, as well as homophobia, peer pressure, media literacy, rumors, teasing, bullying and sexual harassment.

Table 3 shows the numbers of students who attended each block and what was being presented during the blocks. Blocks E and F take place in the middle of the day. Often these blocks are broken up by lunch and so each part of this block is 25 minutes long, as opposed to the longer blocks of 50-60 minutes during the rest of the school day. Fewer students attended these blocks and those who did were exposed to less time witnessing role plays or being involved in an activity. No matter what block students attended, their teacher accompanied them. In the past, teachers would follow up with discussions about the events in the classroom. Due to the students need to complete the feedback survey, teachers were told not to discuss the events with their students until

after the surveys were completed. Feedback surveys with instructions were placed in the attending teachers' mailboxes at the end of MVP Day. Due to the snowstorm that cancelled classes on February 14, the surveys were administered on February 15. Completed surveys were either put in a general location or picked up by the principal investigator.

Table 3

Event Attendance, number and percent of attendance

Event Description	Number	Percent
A and B block A skit about a party where drinking takes place and a sexual assault occurs		
Session 1	138	28.3
Session 2	140	28.7
D and F block Two short skits focused on how put-downs, rumors and stereotypes can escalate into a more hostile environment.		
Session 1	140	28.7
Session 2	131	26.9
E block A series of vignettes about peer pressure, gender stereotypes, homophobia and exclusion	58	11.9
E block A discussion of the role of the media and music in contributing to gender stereotypes, gender inequality and negative body image	10	2.1
E block A series of essays, stories and poems about gender stereotypes, relationships, harassment, sexual harassment and dating assault	55	11.3
E block Video of Newton North MVP mentors from the last nine years sharing their experiences of MVP	15	3.1

Overall, respondents reported positive likely changes in behavior for all the topic areas. In Table 4 the results were tabulated and correlated with the number of students exposed to the topics. Through the students' self-evaluation process, all topics reported noticeable and substantial changes in behavior on the part of the participants.

Table 4 lists the likely changes based on individual topics. The greatest number of students perceived their behavior change with respect to teen dating abuse and the "red flags," or warning signs, that lead up to it, such as alcohol abuse, non-consent and sexual harassment. Again, more students attended these blocks and were exposed to more role plays than those in the E blocks, which include the shortened blocks interrupted by lunch block. The high number of students attending these sessions allows for validity and reliability in interpreting the data.

Table 4 demonstrates likely changes in behavior by topic areas.

Table 4
Likely Changes in Behavior—by Topic Area

Topic	Mean	Likely Change
Dating Violence	3.75	+ .75
Spreading Rumors	3.58	+ .58
Sexual Harassment	3.49	+ .49
Bullying	3.43	+ .43
Homophobia	3.43	+ .43
Peer Pressure	3.38	+ .38
Stereotypes	3.37	+ .37

The common themes that emerged from the questionnaires are summarized in Table 5. The significance of increased awareness, increased ability to interact among students and increased capacity to intervene in harassment, sexual harassment and teen dating violence are most important in determining the effectiveness the role plays and interactive art activities have on the behavior changes perceived by the students who attended MVP Day. Debernardo (SSRE, 2007) states, "While exposure to the content of specific MVP Day events and/or an increased dosage of attending multiple events may

have some benefit for students, results suggest that any level of participation in MVP Day

can be helpful in leading to likely changes in behavior and increased awareness when

dealing with harassment, sexual harassment, and teen dating abuse"

(p. 8).

Table 5 on the next page provides the data for the common themes that reflect the

goals of the program and shows the areas in which they are significant.

Table 5
Common Themes that Reflect Goals

Based on what I experienced during MVP day, I feel…	Percentages of Responses on Likert Scale				
Awareness	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
… more aware of how certain situations can lead to sexual harassment and assault	1%	6%	14%	62%	17%
… more aware of how teasing and harassing others can create an environment where not everyone feels safe	1%	7%	21%	54%	16%
Interaction					
… more comfortable talking about sexual harassment and assault with people at school	2%	7%	26%	47%	18%
… more informed about the legal issues involving consent and non-consent for sexual activity in situations where people are drinking or using drugs	4%	12%	27%	41%	16%
Intervention					
… like I would know what to do if a friend of mine came to me and said they had been sexually assaulted	3%	12%	30%	46%	10%
…more comfortable confronting my friends when they are teasing or harassing someone we don't know	3%	10%	32%	48%	7%
School Support					
… like I would have a lot of support in this school if someone is harassing me	3%	7%	29%	48%	13%

Table 6 suggests that likely perceived behavioral change exists whether the

student observed one, two or more events. Also very significant is the statistical

difference between the high school students compared with the high school MVP mentors

after observing the role plays on MVP Day. The greater statistical differences among the

MVP members help in drawing the conclusion that participation in the MVP program as

a mentor contributes even more to increased awareness and action taken than that

experienced by the general population of students.

Table 6
Perceived Behavioral Changes

	Non-member One Event	Non-member Two or More Events	MVP Member Any Number of Events
Number of Students	N=333	N=89	N=65
Likely Changes in Behavior	3.43	3.43	3.87
Dating Violence	3.71	3.71	4.04
Sexual Harassment and Assault	3.42	3.39	3.93
Homophobia	3.37	3.40	3.84
Stereotypes	3.32	3.33	3.71
Spreading Rumors	3.52	3.56	3.92
Peer Pressure	3.33	3.28	3.77
Bullying	3.36	3.38	3.87
Increased Assets	3.57	3.61	4.07
Awareness	3.77	3.77	4.22
Intervention	3.53	3.63	4.07
Interaction	3.40	3.42	3.91

Alumni Student Interviews

Six former MVP mentors involved in MVP from 1998–2006 were interviewed in this

study. The students, three males and three females, had graduated from Newton North

High School and were in college when interviewed. Each of the six former mentors were

involved in MVP for three years, participated in the middle school visits and presented

the MVP lessons along with being involved in peer mentoring at the high school during MVP Day.

The interviews were videotaped in order for me to both observe the subjects' movements and listen to their responses. The interview responses were transcribed, coded and then placed in categories based on repeating themes.

Five of the six students who were interviewed had participated in the role plays by collaborating on scripts, acting, directing or following up with reflective questions to the audience. One of the students interviewed was one of the original 14 members of MVP when it began in 1998. When MVP first started, the role plays were not part of the program, but teaching the middle school students and speaking to the high school students was a part of their experience.

Table 7 lists the themes that emerged from the alumni mentors interviewed. Letters have been used to identify the interviewees. Letters N, H and S represent the males and letters A, L and R represent the females who were interviewed.

Table 7

Student Interviews—Recurring Themes

Themes	Male Student N	Male Student H	Male Student S	Female Student A	Female Student L	Female Student R
Empathy	x	x	x	x	x	x
Bystander Actions	x	x	x	x	x	x
Sense of Community	x	x	x	x	x	x
Perceived Changes in Behavior	x		x	x	x	
Increased Awareness	x	x	x	x	x	x
Creating a Difference	x	x	x	x	x	x
Learning Over Time	x	x	x			x
Value of Teaching Peers and Younger Students	x	x	x	x	x	x
Participating and Learning from the Role Plays		x	x	x	x	x
Leadership		x	x	x		x
Challenges		x		x	x	x
Empowerment		x		x		x

Themes from Student Interviews:

Creating a Difference

Those interviewed spoke of "creating a difference" at Newton North. They had observed the disrespect demonstrated in the school and wanted to be part of the solution. The alumni mentors also mentioned that increasing awareness about stereotyping of gender by the media was important to talk about because often students felt pressure to conform to the stereotyped images. Communicating with other middle school students about their own difficult experiences in middle school seemed to help the younger students deal with

similar issues. Students also spoke passionately about instances of a friend or family member having been a victim of sexual abuse and wanting to do something to change the culture of violence of which this was a part.

Learning Over Time

The former mentors consistently mentioned that their understanding of what it meant to be an active bystander and of their strengths as a leader grew and deepened over time. They were aware of the process of their own development. One student mentioned that her understanding of the material and goals deepened as she matured. Several others spoke of their connection to each other and the group and how that contributed to their increased willingness to take on responsibility and expanding their leadership capabilities.

Value of Middle School Teaching

All of the students mentioned the value of teaching at the middle school and described what they learned. In some cases, they learned the hard way, by not feeling prepared enough or by having felt challenged with a particular group. They also shared the exuberance they felt when the teaching went well and the students responded favorably. Four of alumni mentioned their own experience listening to their MVP mentor in 8th grade and how important that experience was for them. They felt a strong connection with their mentor when they arrived at the high school. They all felt empowered and

challenged by the teaching experience. They felt they were making a difference, even if just for one student.

Participation in and Learning from the Role Plays

MVP members began writing, directing and performing the role plays in 2003. The role plays were mentioned by five of the interviewed students as being an important vehicle for communicating the MVP messages. The students reflected on the process of the role plays whether it be performing, witnessing, directing or guiding their peers, as well as ways to encourage audience participation. They commented on how all the teachers/advisors worked collaboratively to create a program that they all could learn from, recalling that students and teachers worked together, listened to each other, disagreed, compromised, worked things out and all trusted the process. The students mentioned they felt affirmed and that they had had an impact on the tradition that is still followed today, where MVP mentors create, direct, perform, and dialogue with the audience about student role plays.

Empathy

One student spoke of the importance of empathy and how it helped shift audience sentiment during role plays. Another student spoke of an experience that had occurred the previous year, where an audience member yelled out during a sexual assault scene, "Go for it." Everyone was silent. When the role play was over, the students in the audience

directed their comments to the disruptive student and made it clear that his hostile attitude was the exact reason for doing this work. Everyone understood the significance of this episode.

One student mentioned that drama was vital because it helped people make an empathic connection to each other. By mentors acting out the role plays and participating with the audience in dialogue and reflection, the audience members felt empathy and connected to others in the group.

Challenges

Most of the students interviewed mentioned that initially upon becoming an MVP mentor, they did not stand up to their peers concerning harassment and other disrespectful behavior. It took time and a sense of community for them to feel they were not alone and could depend on other MVP mentors supporting them. One student mentioned that as she became older, she was no longer intimidated by her peers or the younger students and could speak up more easily. She developed her own voice whether MVP allies were around or not.

Leadership

All six former students mentioned the significance of their role as a leader in MVP and its effect both in high school and as young adults. They mentioned that they gained

confidence in themselves and in their ability to work toward a common goal with other MVP members, friends and the larger community.

Empowerment

Individually, and collectively, those interviewed felt empowered, connected and committed to the MVP work. Three of the students mentioned their difficulty when entering college, as the culture in their new schools seemed so different. They realized they had to stay connected to their own values and feel things out for themselves before they could get involved in any leadership role. One student mentioned how her experience in MVP helped her to stand up to a teacher who gave out Christmas cards to the entire class. She explained to her teacher in a respectful way that she was Jewish, and reflected that if "I don't say anything, no one will learn."

Bystander Actions

Many of the students spoke of bystander actions and how they initially were challenged by this component of the MVP agenda. One student said that once he realized that he had to determine how he might respond in a given situation, and that the situation would differ each time, he was better able to give examples of how to be an active bystander to the middle school students. Another student mentioned that as a freshman in college she needed to address the challenge of being an active bystander in her new environment. She felt that at her college there was little sense of community or mutual respect and support.

One student reflected that he internalized the bystander message in high school but needed to start challenging himself in college. In time, he felt he might be able to become a more active spokesperson with his peers.

Perceived Changes in Behavior

All the mentors mentioned at one time or another how they changed as a result of their participation in MVP. For some it was very gradual, and for others it happened during or right after the training.

Increased Awareness

All the interviewees mentioned an increased personal awareness, and that awareness of a problem is the first step to being able to solve it. One student mentioned that if you are not conscious of an injustice, you perpetuate the problem. Another student spoke of having to get clear concerning his attitude about degrading lyrics and movies before going to the middle schools so that he could speak from a personally conscious and knowledgeable position.

Sense of Community

In speaking about leadership and empowerment, the students easily transitioned from talking about the school community to talking about the wider Newton community.

Students mentioned the importance of working with teachers and parents as well as with collaborating with the students on the south side of the city. There was a collective sense that they were all in it together and they were proud that the Newton community supported students in their MVP efforts.

Long-Term Effects on the Mentors Participating in the MVP Program

All of the students spoke eloquently and passionately about their time spent in the MVP program. Three of the six were actively involved at their colleges in work similar to that of MVP. The other two related stories indicating that their MVP learning and experiences still informed their behavior and was very much a part of them. Each of them spoke eloquently about their experiences and about the significance to them of their MVP involvement.

Trusting students to share their authentic truth and teach younger students is an empowering experience that helped these six former high school students take on greater responsibility and develop leadership qualities. In addition, beyond what they gained by developing leadership skills, they were part of and benefited from an integrated learning process that takes place during the creative process of mentoring and teaching, acting in or witnessing the role plays, and relationally connecting to and being part of a supportive community. The alumni mentors spoke about their mentoring of younger students, teaching their peers and presenting role plays where challenging situations were acted out, dialogued about and reflected upon in a connected and supportive community. I

believe the experience of mentoring was empowering and led to an embodied integration within each individual that was mindful, present and alive.

Summative Evaluation of the Four Components of Data Collected

1. The data findings (pre and post questionnaires) suggest the training is a positive and effective tool in preparing mentors to work with their peers as well as with the middle school students. With the exception of one question that involved a small difference, all the statements moved in a positive direction.

2. The middle school teachers' were very supportive of the MVP program and demonstrate this through their comments that the program is effective. At the same time, their feedback is also specific and was useful in helping revise and improve the training sessions for the mentors.

3. The posttest feedback sheet of MVP Day reinforces the positive short-term results experienced by the students from witnessing, dialoguing and reflecting about the role plays as a community. The results are significant in terms of the students' awareness, interaction with each other and intervention in helping others in harassing, sexually harassing and dating abuse situations. The MVP mentors demonstrated a greater statistical difference in these areas than the general population of students. Students also perceive that they can receive help and support within the school in these areas. It is significant to note that the students' self-reporting suggests that by witnessing and processing the role plays they are more mindful and present. This increased awareness and empathy helps to facilitate the transfer of their experience into action by their becoming active bystanders in these situations. The percentage of students who remained

in the "Not Sure" column might benefit from other MVP Day interactive activities held at different times during the year.

4. The 68 students who filled out the pre and post questionnaires along with the 487 male and female respondents who completed the feedback form after participating in MVP Day represent a significant sample size and cross section of students grades 9-12 including both mentors and average high school students.

5. The most significant results from the alumni interviews suggest the long-term positive effects of participation in a prevention program involving the expressive arts and a creative pedagogy that empowers leadership through mentoring, where students can embody their learning and carry it with them into the rest of their lives.

The findings suggest the MVP training supports the mentors in their ability to become active bystanders and leaders in this work not only in the short run and while they are in the program, but over the long term, when they are no longer in the program. The findings also suggest for the students not in the MVP program that witnessing, dialoguing and reflecting on the dramatic role plays contributes to becoming a more aware and active bystander in harassing, sexually harassing and teen dating abuse situations.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter will focus on summarizing my research findings in relation to the literature. A discussion of the integrated pedagogy inherent in the MVP program and future implications of this study will be presented. An action plan created for the MVP program in Newton will be introduced. The chapter will conclude with personal reflections on the process of establishing the MVP program.

Research Findings in Relationship to Role Plays

The research findings of this dissertation strongly suggest that there are positive short- and long-term effects of the MVP program on the Newton North students' social, emotional and relational development. Some examples of social development illustrated in the short-term findings are that student respondents perceive an increased awareness of how certain situations can lead to sexual harassment and dating assault, that the students became more comfortable intervening in harassing situations and the students felt they had developed a greater ability to discuss these situations with people at school. With regard to the students' emotional development, the student interviewees report long-term effects such as increased empathy, self-awareness and heightened understanding and awareness of harassing situations.

There are a number of programs mentioned in the literature review that utilize dramatic role plays involving audience members to help students deal with situations such as bullying, sexual harassment and the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse. One of the unique aspects of the current evaluation research is that it includes role playing as well as audience observation and participation with the actors in a mutually creative process. Rohd's (1998) project *Hope is Vital* is a program involving role plays that "provides a lab for problem solving, for seeking options and for practicing solutions" (p. xix). The process of creating, acting, witnessing and dialoguing about the role plays used in the MVP program is similar to Rohd's work in that it is seeking options and practicing solutions. This creative process has the ability to transform an individual; it can be personally relevant and become more lasting over time. The MVP role plays provide direct experience that takes shape through the scenarios and provide the audience with the opportunity to speak about issues that are often silenced. The audience members are actively engaged and become co-creators of this lived experience as it unfolds through the role play process. The findings from the posttest student feedback form and the alumni interviews suggest that the effect of the role plays and the reflection process on the students is powerful, both in the short term and over time.

Theoretical Models and Findings

The MVP program in Newton is based on several theoretical models that are supported by the research findings. The first model, that of Goleman's (2006) social and emotional intelligences, is founded on the physiology of the brain and how and why individuals

develop these intelligences and skills. Goleman (1995) believes that adolescence is an optimal period to reinforce these skills as the brain is still developing at this time. The MVP training takes this model into account and focuses on developing social, emotional and relational skills, and prepares the mentors to become leaders in addressing their peers and younger students. The research findings suggest the respondents' awareness, interaction and intervention behaviors toward others in fact did increase after viewing the role plays during MVP Day. Goleman speaks of emotional intelligence as being composed of the ability to feel empathy, self-awareness and a greater ability to interact socially. The alumni student interviews also affirm these findings over subsequent years.

In MVP, one of the goals is that students will become active bystanders who will assist others during harassing, sexually harassing or "power over" dating situations. A finding of the posttest questionnaire and of the pre and post training questionnaire demonstrates that students perceived an increased inclination to intervene in harassing, sexually harassing and "power over" dating situations after they experienced the training and witnessed and reflected on the role plays. Mobilizing and activating bystanders in harassing, sexually harassing and "power over" others scenarios has been cited repeatedly (Katz, 1993; Slaby, 1994; Stein, 1994; Jeffrey, 2004, Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco, et al, 2004) as being effective in the prevention of these behaviors.

Also important to this program evaluation study is the significance of Relational Cultural Theory (RCT). Surrey's (2005) work in RCT deals with the concept of "relational mindfulness." She speaks about the notion of "I," "you" and "we" and how they are expanded through their interactions through the creative process of the RCT model. Five qualities that can come from these interactions are increased energy, being

empowered, knowledge of self and other, increased self worth and the capacity to act

(Miller, Stiver, 1999). The dynamic quality of relationships, the group "we," and building

a supportive community are also important to RCT's creative process. This theoretical

model provides a developmental and psychological framework for students' learning and

for their understanding of and navigating through relationships. Role plays acted out

during MVP Day were designed to promote healthy relationships by highlighting

interpersonal disconnections and providing students with the tools necessary for dealing

with those disconnections by modeling both a personal and community healing process.

Witnessing, reflecting and dialoging in a community setting helped to provide different

perspectives for students as well as a "mindfulness of other-in-relation," which in turn

reinforced empathetic connection between students. The idea that students are not alone

and can be supported by each other was communicated through these processes. The

findings of the posttest questionnaire reinforce the respondents' belief that through the

presentation of the role plays, students can find support at the school from other students,

teachers, counselors and administrators in dealing with harassing, sexually harassing and

"power over" situations, as well as strengthen their perception that they would be more

likely to intervene in the above situations.

Goleman (2006) reports that

the best social and emotional programs are designed to fit seamlessly into the standard school curriculum for children at every age, [and] include skills like self-awareness and managing distressing emotions, empathy and navigating relationships smoothly. A definitive meta-analysis of more than one hundred studies of these programs showed that students not only mastered abilities like calming down and getting along better, but, more to the point here, learned more effectively. (pp. 283–284)

The concepts demonstrated in the meta-analysis that Goleman writes about reinforce the positive findings of the MVP evaluation study, that social and emotional development seamlessly interwoven as facets of the MVP leadership and mentoring program works best.

Gardner's (1993) Multiple Intelligence Theory supports the use of the expressive arts as an important avenue for the many ways students learn. Gardner (1993) clearly states, "Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand other people, what motivates them, how they work, and how to work cooperatively with them. Intrapersonal relationships . . . [are] a correlative ability[,] applied inward" (Gardner, p. 9). Two specific examples from my evaluation research study illustrate student-perceived behavior changes: one by the respondents after they witnessed and processed the role plays on MVP Day, and the second from the alumni student interviews. Both groups substantiated an increase in interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

Integrated Pedagogical Process

The research findings demonstrated in this dissertation have affirmed both the short- and long-term benefits of the MVP program: increased student awareness; a greater comfort interacting with each other regarding harassment, sexually harassing and dating assault situations; and a greater likelihood to intervene as an active bystander in these situations.

An unarticulated discovery underlying the holistic and dynamic process is at the heart of my work and is what I call the "integrated pedagogical process" inherent in the MVP program (Figure 4 and Figure 5 illustrate this process in a one-dimensional diagram

and three-dimensional drawing, respectively, and can be found in Appendix G). This integrated pedagogical process was initially intuited, next consciously pursued, then articulated through this dissertation process and now is exhibited in Appendix G. The three-dimensional drawing (Appendix G, Figure 5) is one of Rudolph Laban's and is a visual representation of the spatial harmony of the theoretical models and concepts used in the MVP program to promote an "embodied knowing" (Gendlin, 1978, Perl, 2004).

Dunlap (1998), an apprentice of Laban's, said, "Laban divided movement themes into groups of four, organizing them as a spiral curriculum. The main headings touched upon in Laban's spiral were the body, effort, space and relationships to others" (p. 243). Laban's (1966) three-dimensional space harmony paths symbolize this process-oriented approach that supports students by guiding both the mentors and witnesses in relation to self and other by focusing inward and communicating outward through the use of their voice, helping them to transfer their learning into action. Being an active bystander can be contagious. Helping another person is modeled and communicated, thus establishing a group "we," where connections are created and enlarged between and among students. This in turn helps strengthen the growing "we" and helps bring about a more connected and supportive community. The integrated pedagogical process (Appendix G, Figure 4) helps facilitate these goals and becomes a series of spirals dancing.

This pedagogical process includes the mentors and student audience members creating, participating, experiencing, and processing the MVP scenarios and is built on a dynamic interweaving of the conceptual and experiential learning processes. This interweaving is described by Beardall, Bergman and Surrey (2007):

It begins on the verbal and conceptual level and is reinforced through experiential and kinesthetic learning. Through the stages of witnessing, dialoging, reflecting and listening, the process ultimately leads to and reinforces the student's ability to apply and transfer the skills and concepts learned. These processes are interrelated; each builds on and spirals with the others. (p. xxviii)

Using visualizations and guided imagery based on Gendlin's (1978) idea of listening to the body when training the mentors facilitates the development of role plays based on an individual's "felt sense" and experience. This process allows a scene to be created for the audience to view and use to interact with the actors. Performing, witnessing and dialoguing about the role plays can produce a "collective felt sense" and "collective shift" among the audience members where they sit on the edges of their seats watching their ideas be put into action. As one of the alumni mentors mentioned, "theatre is a powerful way to establish a deep, empathetic connection."

Perl (2004) invokes Gendlin's (1978) process of experiential knowing when she writes, "Ultimately, a theory of embodied knowing begins with felt sense and draws from it a theory of experiencing [,] . . . one that says: All knowing is embodied in persons; no knowing happens outside of that; without the body, we know nothing" (p. 60). The multiplicity of the integrated holistic pedagogical processes helps students to listen and become more mindful, assisting them to transfer their knowledge into action whether in helping another or themselves. It is important to note here that the MVP mentors who completed the feedback form after viewing MVP Day reported higher awareness, interaction and perceived intervention than the high school students not included in the program. This suggests increased growth through their participation and involvement in the MVP program.

The alumni students whom I interviewed were passionate as they spoke of continuing to embody MVP's goals to the present day. They spoke of life skills they developed, such as increased empathy, leadership and the ability to make good decisions that influenced their behavior and actions. Although the alumni were only six students, the results were clear and powerful. The students were articulate and spoke from their retrospective experiences and involvement in the program. One student mentioned, "We've seen a legacy that has developed around MVP and its messages." Their responses reflect the positive long-term results of an integrated pedagogical process explained by this writer that is the merging of the bodily felt sense, relational cultural model and the creative art process. One alumni student commented, "I have taken MVP's message of anti-violence to my college campus. I am part of a men's group looking at issues of sexual abuse and how we as men can bring about a positive change." Another student responded to students currently at the high school, "Don't loose perspective to what you are doing—no matter how small. What you are doing is making a difference."

This pedagogical process supports the integration of expressive arts (movement, drama, writing and art), developmental theory (Social Intelligence Theory, Emotional Intelligence Theory, RCT and Multiple Intelligences Theory) and the "embodied knowing" of students involved in the wellness and prevention work of the MVP program. The impact of this process is demonstrated by the research findings both in the short term and over time. Dance/movement therapist Adler (2002) and her idea of "conscious embodiment" speak to a mind/body integration that takes place when the observer witnesses the mover. A similar relationship can be applied, in this case, to the actor, with the audience as witness. Gendlin (1978) speaks of the inner bodily "felt sense"

experience that can lead to a "felt shift," often affecting one's outer thoughts and actions. An individual's body, movement repertoire and patterns reveal much about a person and are a metaphor for who that person is in the world. Our bodily experiences are at the center of our knowing, being and interacting with each other. This process that begins with the body experience can lead to "feeling thoughts" (Gendlin, 1991), speaking and action and can be an approach dance/movement therapists use to help facilitate and guide teachers in working with their students. I believe this frontier needs to be more fully explored and applied in educating our young people.

Relation to self, the other and the "we" are all multiple ways of coming to the center of an inner knowing (body sense) and of transferring that knowledge into outer action. This is part of an integrated educational process. The research findings affirmed this integrated pedagogical process as effective in the MVP teaching model in Newton. Moreover, the long-term effects of the MVP program on the alumni students who were interviewed suggest that this training and pedagogical process, which combine relational cultural theory, social intelligence theory and emotional intelligence theory with the expressive therapies, is effective over time.

Future Implications of This Program Evaluation Study

The integrated and holistic way that students know and share their knowing is inherent in MVP's pedagogical process and is not usually promoted in schools. The integrated

process needs to be described and made more available among educators. This integrated pedagogical process promotes an experiential way of "embodied knowing" and, to the best of my knowledge, is not yet consciously taught in schools. This process can be a possible antidote to the mixed messages and degrading gender stereotypes promoted by the media that adolescents receive daily. Our over-stimulating culture contributes to adolescents dissociating, disconnecting and being distracted. This integrated pedagogical process, however, supports a mindful experiential knowing in each student, recognizing that there is an active presence in each person waiting to be awakened in connecting to self and to others. The process is empowering for adolescents, reinforcing for them that they are in charge of their own decisions and that they can be active role models and leaders in their own growth and development and that of others.

Additional implications of this work suggest that the interface of education and the expressive therapies need to be more carefully examined in the future. Attention to this interface, more fully explored, would have significant implications for how schools engage students to take responsibility and feel pride in their own learning. The idea of "relational transmission" that Janet Surrey describes from her expansion of RCT is present in MVP (Surrey, 2005). When people share their own experience or story with another, they give some part of themselves away in order to help someone else. Both parties benefit from this. When students process their "story" in order to teach someone else, the learning stays with them and is integrated into their bodily knowing. Siegel (1999) reinforces this by saying "Emotional engagement enhances learning" (p. 253). Few programs encourage honoring what students know in this way.

Limitations of this particular program evaluation study have been listed previously and include: lack of a control group, research conducted using only one site, the small number of alumni students interviewed, the coordinator of the program is also the principal investigator, limited time given between pre-and post-questionnaires concerning the training, and respondents self-report about their possible behavioral change after interacting in the events of MVP Day.

Despite these limitations, findings suggest further work should be conducted to strengthen the MVP program. In addition, preliminary findings suggest that the program should be expanded to other schools. Research must continue into a third year for MVP to be considered an "approved" program by the Department of Education on the state and national levels, at which time the Department of Education can evaluate the MVP program for possible "approved" status. This approved status could allow program expansion by funding other public schools to establish an MVP program of their own.

Action Plan for MVP

The following Action Plan was created as a direct, and indirect, result of the research findings. The plan lists what is needed to create a stronger and more established program within the school community. The three points of the action plan are: 1) Improve and build upon what is successful in the training of MVP mentors, 2) continue to build upon the staff development of the teachers in the middle and high school, and 3) Expand communication to parents, students and the community.

Improve MVP Training

The first suggestion, to improve and build upon the existing training of the mentors, can use the comments of the middle school teachers, which suggested specific changes regarding group dynamics within the middle school classroom. A key change would be to promote less lecturing and more interactive activities to the 8th graders in the middle schools. Cooperative movement games, for example, help to establish connections and collaborative teamwork within the group. Spending more time in these types of activities would help create a more dynamic interaction among the MVP mentors. Cooperative movement games would also help in establishing a stronger personal foundation for each mentor to work from.

Currently, the mentors follow a script listing specific topics that are presented in the role plays they practice during the training. It would be more effective to have the trainees go through a process where they create their own scripts, by putting together snap-shot scenarios from their own experiences or observations, which would then be similar to the scenarios presented during MVP Day. When speaking from their own experience, mentors will be more able to share their story or truth, rather than having to lecture to the 8th graders.

Other improvements to the training of the mentors would be to involve a youth police officer who could speak of the legal issues involved in "power over" another situations, and a middle school teacher who could speak of the challenges when presenting to the 8th graders. This reaching out to community experts would be more

than just a symbolic gesture, and would in fact improve the program in important ways by inviting community members to work together in this prevention work.

Staff Development

The second area of the action plan focuses on staff development of middle and high school teachers. Teachers need to feel ownership of the program and that MVP is integrated into their school. Communication with middle school teachers needs to be continued and strengthened. Results of middle school teachers' feedback comments during the program evaluation study can be shared and discussed with them. Asking for further suggestions and further involving the middle school teachers is essential. It may be beneficial to share with the middle school teachers many of the comments of the alumni students to show the long-term benefits of the program. The comprehensive nature of the program, as well as the middle and high school teachers' involvement and ownership of the MVP program, is crucial to its success (Appendix H depicts the organizational chart of the program). According to *Blueprints for Violence Prevention* (2001), another component leading to the success of violence prevention programs is having a strong staff "brought in to the philosophies of the program" (Mihalic et al., p. 13).

At the high school level, it will be important to organize workshops that clearly communicate what the MVP messages are to high school teachers. One idea is to conduct a faculty meeting where role-play snapshots depict harassment, sexual harassment and problematic behavior in order to help teachers confront what they see and hear in their

classrooms and in the halls, and to demonstrate how best to respond in order to support students. Another step in communicating to teachers will be to develop and hand out suggestions for how to deal with difficult harassing, sexually harassing and "power over" another situations (See Appendix I).

Other suggestions are to have mentors present the MVP material, asking teachers to become allies in this work. I would also suggest introducing MVP to any new Newton North staff and faculty at a special meeting, so they can learn the background and history of the program. In addition, keep the staff updated about current research on adolescence and prevention, and present the findings of this evaluation research study to the high school faculty and staff, and involve them in brainstorming ideas for further strengthening the program.

It is my intention to share the results of the program evaluation study at individual meetings with parents, students, teachers and administrators. These meetings will help communicate and establish a consistent message about harassment, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse. Everyone involved with the students, needs to understand that silence implies permission for the harassing and abusive remarks or behaviors to continue. I would encourage further administration support by asking for more time to present at faculty meetings and new teacher workshops, and by seeking a commitment for funding for specific aspects of the program that are not funded by the State. It is also critical to train the MVP advisors in how to take over the program so that it can succeed and continue without my presence.

Build Community-Wide Support

The third area of the action plan is to build community-wide support and understanding and increase parental involvement in promoting MVP values of inclusion, leadership, collaboration and respect. The following activities will promote communication and better inform teachers, students, parents and administrators about the MVP program within the school and community: 1) Establish a monthly column in the high school newspaper (*The Newtonite*) announcing upcoming MVP events, statistics on relevant issues and a list of resources where students can receive support; 2) Expand the current public relations network to include publicizing to the community the goals and activities of MVP. This can be done through the local paper, elementary school newsletters, middle school newspapers and PTSO correspondence; and 3) Make it a priority to communicate with parents about the program, by holding a performance just for parents led by MVP students, for example, so that dialogue and reflection can take place on the parental level.

The feedback survey reinforced the short-term benefits of the role plays during MVP Day. Therefore, possibly establishing a traveling drama troupe, in addition to performing the role plays in the middle schools and during MVP Day, would increase exposure to the program that would be an asset in solidifying the MVP program and communicating its goals within the community.

The first MVP Summit will take place in January 2008, when area schools will be invited to meet and discuss MVP goals and how the schools can work together and

collaborate on making the schools safer and more respectful places to be. Many schools from around the Boston area will be invited to participate.

Another idea is to continue to invite area groups, parents and students to "Take Back the Night." This is a community event where citizens walk to city hall from Newton North High School in order to raise awareness of MVP goals while making the streets safer. The next Take Back the Night event will be held in April 2008. Many local groups, such as Jane Doe, and the Domestic Violence Prevention Partnership groups, will be participating this year along with the local Parent/Teacher/Student Organization (PTSOs).

A more long-range goal is to speak to Ann Gilligan from the Massachusetts Department of Education to find out the specific process MVP must follow to be considered for the "approved list" of violence prevention programs. And lastly to conduct a search for grants to continue the necessary research to achieve this goal is also on the list of long-term goals.

Summary

One of the continued challenges in coordinating Newton's MVP program is to keep pace with the many changes that are on the "growing edge" of educating, organizing and establishing a program such as MVP. In spite of the Department of Justice's publication *Blueprints for Violence Prevention*, there is no script to follow. Collaborating, listening, connecting, assessing, implementing, improving, and the cycle continues on. There is no ending, only change and process and movement and change and . . . .

The interface between the expressive therapies and education is evident throughout this dissertation process. Students need to be supported by and during the process. As mentioned previously, professional resources and a counseling network must be available. The expressive therapies, the use of developmental and relational cultural theory and the process of bodily focusing on issues—writing, directing, acting, witnessing, dialoguing, reflecting and transferring this learning into action—is the unique and holistic pedagogy inherent in the MVP training and program. Integrative "felt sense," witnessing and sharing in the "collective felt sense" can facilitate a "collective shift" and can be empowering both individually and within the group. The concepts of the "we" and "I am not alone" and "we are in this together" are also empowering. Students learn they can get support by witnessing others navigate relationships and situations. They find they can learn by viewing different perspectives and behavioral options.

The dissertation research study suggests that change occurs in the short term as well as the long term when students act as agents of social change. The interactive experiences of mentoring, listening, performing, witnessing, etc., stay with the students and, I believe, are integrated into their "body sense." The alumni students interviewed demonstrate evidence of this and are presently agents of social change in their personal lives and communities.

Personal Qualities Needed to Innovate Prevention Programs Such As MVP

The U.S. Department of Justice's report (2001) *Blueprints for Violence Prevention* identifies one of the four factors contributing to program success as the "presence of

powerful program champions. These were the individuals who spearheaded implementation efforts. They helped maintain motivation, initiated necessary changes, and orchestrated completion of the many tasks necessary to make projects successful" (p. 13). Reading the report was affirming in learning that other "program champions" took on the many tasks and roles I took on in coordinating and orchestrating the MVP program in Newton. I did not work by myself, and was very fortunate to have administrative support and faculty advisors willing to go the extra miles with me, not to mention the amazing student mentors who helped create and organize many of the program's details and inspire the program's growth.

The qualities of program champion I found to be most helpful in my work were possessing the courage and ability to take risks, and letting go of the belief that having to know how and be able to do everything involved with the program were most important. Trusting the process, listening to myself, the students and getting feedback from educators involved in this work are significant. Assuming the administrative and leadership role, collaborating with advisors in wellness/prevention work, obtaining funding and presenting the program to parents, teachers and administrators are all crucial to the overall process and program success. Constantly asking questions about the teaching and mentoring process, and allowing the evolution of the program to take place while engaging others, are essential. Commitment to following through in spite of challenges is also necessary. Being passionate and enthusiastic, while at the same time objective and receptive is crucial. It is equally imperative to know when to let go as it is to push ahead.

Probing questions to keep asking are: How do we reach students and have them integrate the crucial messages of the program? How do we communicate to teachers, administrators, parents and the community about the vision of the program while listening to the voices and observing the needs of the students? Staying attuned to the changing political climate and navigating the journey of the MVP program within the public schools requires multi skills and involves many people. The wisdom of the saying, "It takes a village. . . ." is true. Connecting and reconnecting with as many allies as possible is critical. Knowing that the healing process in prevention and wellness work is ongoing is important. It necessarily includes creating new strategies, new curricula, revising existing curricula, setting new goals and developing new programs.

There can be a level of denial among both educators and parents when speaking about harassment, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse. In spite of current gender violence statistics, resistant attitudes are expressed, "not my student or my child." These are ongoing challenges.

Reflections

In reflecting about the process of implementing and coordinating the MVP program, a metaphor comes to mind, that of spiraling through a box. The spiral is symbolic of the creative process and the box represents the traditional ways in which public education and school administrations conduct business. The answer of the route, or the way through, from 30 years' experience in the public schools for this writer, is to observe, breathe, flow, shape and dance with the people around you, your environment and the

circumstances of the moment. You must be careful not to become too small or move too fast because otherwise you can fall right through the box. You must also be careful not to become too big or move too slowly because then you might get stuck in the box. If you are conscious of the space, however, and move at a good pace, you can "spiral though" the box successfully. This is challenging and can take many dances to get it right, but when it happens, the movement of the spiral will etch grooves on the inside of the box, transforming the box. As with many creative processes, repetition often does not produce the same results but can nonetheless help future change take place by choreographing new movements, and the process dances on.

As with any wellness and prevention program such as MVP, no matter how successful it is, it is always vulnerable to budget cuts. The urgency for funds is ongoing; the necessity of communicating and connecting with as many students, parents, educators and administrators is important. There is much competition for a small amount of resources. We owe it to our students to keep trying and moving forward. MVP's greatest assets are its students. I believe the more the students are empowered, the stronger the program will be, because students are the voice of the program. In order for the program to succeed over time, it must feel owned by the students, the teachers, parents, administrators and the community.

At the moment, the MVP program encompasses six secondary schools—two high schools and four middle schools in Newton. This program evaluation research study focused on one high school. There is much more to learn about how the program functions on the middle and high school levels, as well as how to keep the program

evolving, yet consistent, at all the schools. The program has become more challenging to manage and sustain as it has grown to its current size.

I began with a vision and 14 students in 1998. It has been a challenging, joyful and meaningful experience demanding continuous self-reflection to coordinate the MVP program. Hopefully, the etched spiral marks within the box I mentioned previously are carved deeply enough that there will be no going backwards from this point, but only forwards-- up and out, creating new shapes and designs. As the MVP program evolves and supports students' growth and change, it provides a new frontier to explore and paves the way for future programs to support students in the same way MVP does.

The legacy of the MVP program in Newton is its belief in the students and their involvement in their own process of growth and change. In the real world of political change, the timing, leadership and shared responsibility create the mix for the vision to keep flowing. Communicating and connecting with others is the heart and soul of the work and is essential to prioritizing, implementing and expanding ideas while they are happening. The traditional model of leadership, from the "top down," is restrictive, limits growth and silences those who might be more fully present and involved. The MVP program uses a model that trains students to be leaders, active bystanders and agents of social change; it nurtures and grows from the "bottom up."

It is my belief that this model will inspire others in bringing forth innovative programs. I am aware that as I have pursued my doctoral studies, completing this program evaluation study and dissertation process, I have come full circle and that I am now back to my roots in dance and movement. For myself, I will keep dancing lightly to

the next vision or dance that lives on "the edges of time." This is my dance, my journey, that of dancer, educator and healer.

APPENDIX A

Pre and Post Training Questionnaires

MENTORS IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION (MVP)

Today's date:

Name of High School:

Circle your gender: MALE   /   FEMALE

Part I: Average High School Student
Please read the following sentences and circle a response that indicates how you think the AVERAGE STUDENT **OF YOUR SAME GENDER** *AT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL would THINK.*

1. It is okay to pressure a date to drink alcohol in order to improve one's chances of getting her to have sex.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

2. A boy can control his behavior no matter how sexually aroused he feels.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

3. It is wrong to have sex with a girl if you have to "talk her into it."

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

4. Boys don't sexually harass girls in high school – its just joking around.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

5. Girls are asking for sexual attention when they wear short skirts and tight clothes.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

6. Using words like "slut", "bitch", and "ho" to refer to girls is acceptable.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

7. As long as no girls are around, boys are comfortable when they are with a group of guys telling dirty jokes and making sexual comments about girls.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

8. Girls lie about being raped just to get back at their dates.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

9. When boys make comments and suggestions about girls' bodies, girls should take it as a compliment.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

PART II: Prevention:

Please read the following sentences and circle a response that best describes YOUR FEELINGS today.

1. It is hard to prevent sexual harassment and violence in high school.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

2. I find it confusing to decide what is harassing and non-harassing behavior among high school students.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

3. I find it confusing to decide what is abusive and non-abusive dating behavior among high school students.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

4. I would not be able to stop someone I did not know well from sexually harassing his girlfriend in high school.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

5. I feel comfortable confronting a male friend about his sexist behavior.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

6. I would not know how to support a female friend who is in an abusive relationship.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

7. If there were a group of boys harassing a girl and I did not know any of them very well, it would make things worse if I tried to stop them.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

8. I would hate to be called a 'wimp', 'nerd' or a 'goody-goody' for trying to stop sexually harassing behavior in high school and therefore would not intervene.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

PART III: Perception of the MVP program:
Please read the following sentences and circle a response that best describes how *YOU THINK* *your participation in MVP is perceived today.*

1. My male friends who know I am in the MVP program, probably think I am a "wuss", nerd or 'goody-goody'.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

2. Being in the MVP program, will be viewed positively by my female friends.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

3. Being in the MVP program, will decrease my chances of dating.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

4. My family is very supportive about me being in the MVP program.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

5. As an MVP leader, I will gain leadership skills that will be useful in life.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

6. I believe that being an MVP mentor helps to clarify my beliefs around sexual harassment.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

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4

MENTORS IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION (MVP)

Today's date:

Name of High School:

Circle your gender: MALE   /   FEMALE

Part I: Average High School Student
Please read the following sentences and circle a response that indicates how you think the
AVERAGE STUDENT OF YOUR SAME GENDER AT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL would THINK.

1. It is okay to pressure a date to drink alcohol in order to improve one's chances of getting her to have sex.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

2. A boy can control his behavior no matter how sexually aroused he feels.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

3. It is wrong to have sex with a girl if you have to "talk her into it."

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

4. Boys don't sexually harass girls in high school – its just joking around.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

5. Girls are asking for sexual attention when they wear short skirts and tight clothes.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

6. Using words like "slut", "bitch", and "ho" to refer to girls is acceptable.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

1

7. As long as no girls are around, boys are comfortable when they are with a group of guys telling dirty jokes and making sexual comments about girls.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

8. Girls lie about being raped just to get back at their dates.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

9. When boys make comments and suggestions about girls' bodies, girls should take it as a compliment.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

PART II: Prevention:
Please read the following sentences and circle a response that best describes YOUR FEELINGS today.

1. It is hard to prevent sexual harassment and violence in high school.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

2. I find it confusing to decide what is harassing and non-harassing behavior among high school students.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

3. I find it confusing to decide what is abusive and non-abusive dating behavior among high school students.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

4. I would not be able to stop someone I did not know well from sexually harassing his girlfriend in high school.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

5. I feel comfortable confronting a male friend about his sexist behavior.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

6. I would not know how to support a female friend who is in an abusive relationship.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

7. If there were a group of boys harassing a girl and I did not know any of them very well, it would make things worse if I tried to stop them.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

8. I would hate to be called a 'wimp', 'nerd' or a 'goody-goody' for trying to stop sexually harassing behavior in high school and therefore would not intervene.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

PART III: Perception of the MVP program:
Please read the following sentences and circle a response that best describes how ***YOU THINK*** *your participation in MVP is perceived today.*

1. My male friends who know I am in the MVP program, probably think I am a "wuss", nerd or 'goody-goody'.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

2. Being in the MVP program, will be viewed positively by my female friends.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

3. Being in the MVP program, will decrease my chances of dating.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

4. My family is very supportive about me being in the MVP program.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

5. As an MVP leader, I will gain leadership skills that will be useful in life.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

6. I believe that being an MVP mentor helps to clarify my beliefs around sexual harassment.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

---

Part III: Your Perceptions

1. List the three most important ideas you learned from MVP.

2. How do you think you can use the MVP experience in your daily life at school?

3. Do you think you could support another student and stand up against sexual harassment? How?

4. Do you think you could stand up for yourself? What support do you think you need to do that?

5. What would help you voice your opinion against sexual harassment if no one else was doing it?

APPENDIX B

Teacher Questionnaire and Responses

Eighth Grade Teacher Questionnaire Regarding MVP

Thank you for answering these few questions. Each year we revise and strengthen the program. Your feedback is most important to the continued improvement of the program.

1. Do you feel the high school students were prepared in knowing and understanding the MVP curriculum?

2. What are the strengths of the MVP program as you see it?

3. What were the challenges of the MVP program as it was presented in your class?

4. Do you feel there is a difference in the way the eighth graders view gender respect, sexual harassment and their role as the bystander after experiencing the MVP program?

5. Was there anything you thought should be discussed that wasn't discussed?

Teachers Responses to Questionnaire

Do you feel the high school students were prepared in knowing and understanding the MVP curriculum?

• For the most part, yes. Exception: When a question was asked which was not in the "book."

• The two students I had in my room were wonderful with the kids, very informative and engaged the students in good discussion.

• I think they could have been a bit more prepared.

• Yes, they had a good sense of material. I'm not sure they had a good sense of whether the kids were understanding the information.

• I think they were prepared and had many different ways of teaching the curriculum.

• Yes. They had a positive collective approach.

• Yes. They were well prepared.

• Yes, they were prepared and understood the curriculum.

• Yes, better than any other year.

• Yes, although there was one dominant leader who seemed to know his material and a few people who relied heavily on their book.

• Yes, they seemed appropriately confident.

• Yes.

• Yes.

• There were four high school students, but only two presented.

• Somewhat, But they don't always "own" it—too much fumbling.

• In general, yes. Some students are better than others.

• Overall, yes. Some of the words like "objectification" were difficult for them to make clear to the middle school students.

• This depended on the HS students dynamics with each other and composition of the group.

What are the strengths of the MVP program as you see it?

• It's beneficial for the 8th graders to hear from high schoolers about their experiences and why they joined MVP (testimonials). The high school students get a great teaching experience and something to boost their confidence as they speak in front of others. The issues brought up are important to address at this age. Plus 8th graders get contact with many strong male and female role models.
• It is great for the students to get to interact with the high school students and it's nice for the high school students to get a chance to practice teaching. The students enjoy asking questions about the high school especially around high school registration time.
• It connects older students with younger. It deals with serious issues and allows students to explore their feelings in a comfortable and safe setting.
• Students speaking to students.
• A good introduction to our students about very important topics.
• Message heard from peers, thought-provoking exercises and activities. Skits were well planned out and effective.
• Giving the high school students a chance to strengthen their leadership. Introducing high school social activist possibilities.
• Making connections with middle school students.
• MVP draws a solid group of students who are positive role models. I enjoyed the skits.
• I think it raises awareness of the serious side of "teasing."
• I think it's always good when high school students speak to middle school kids. That's a plus.
• Opening the door is important for future conversations; seeing positive high school role models.
• Peer leadership and mentoring are great. The HS kids were so open and it was really great for the HS students to hear about some of the stuff they shared.
• Peer to peer interaction, importance of messages, development of action steps.
• I think the strengths are having high school students interact with middle school students in a formal but relatively relaxed way. It is really helpful that positive role models from high school meet with middle school students.
• Yes, they did a super job this year.
• Yes, in the two sessions I observed.
• No, yes. I think they understand it but I think very few are capable enough developmentally to teach the younger students.

What were the challenges of the MVP program as it was presented in your class?

• Some 8th grade boys were acting out especially discussions regarding boys.

• The group of boys in this room are immature.

• Connecting to a wide cross-section of 8th graders in varying positions and understandings in regard to the curriculum.

• I thought the program went well. The boys were a little disappointed that there were 6 MVP boys and no girls. My main concern was there was little "wait time" for students to answer the questions.

• Getting the class to participate is always a challenge but the 8th graders eventually participated. It's better for the mentors to act out the skits and role plays; it is a challenge for the 8th graders.

• Young adults as teachers! Some didn't have the knack of talking with kids; needs to be at least one strong, outgoing teenager in the pair.

• There were no challenges. The two presenters knew what they were doing and were enthusiastic and knowledgeable.

• The mentors were quiet.

• Managing a class that is—too quiet, makes inappropriate comments, redirect inappropriate behavior.

• The way the material was presented was sometimes difficult for the 8th graders to respond to. Not all mentors shared equal responsibility in leading the discussions/lessons.

• This year, none.

• I thought it was difficult for some of the "teachers" to generate conversation/discussion. I still think we are forcing kids to accept the "old" stereotypes with the box activity.

• It was smooth sailing in my room.

• Males should be separated from females. Some students are intimidated by the other sex while some students "speakout" in an embarrassing manner.

• At times, focus unclear, ability to "hook" the students needs to be stronger.

• Lost focus during one session, more wait-time needed.

• Not enough time! By the third time the students were here, I could see the difference in the HS students comfort level—more sessions would be even more effective.

• Needs to be more interactive. Also need to be sure to leave time for action plan or add more visits as follow-up in the spring.

APPENDIX C

Teacher Instruction Sheet and Student Feedback Form

INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEWTON M.V.P. DAY ASSESSMENT FORM

This packet contains questionnaires to be administered by you to all students in the class period(s) that attended an MVP Day session. The survey is designed to help us learn about the students' responses to some of the situations addressed during MVP Day.

The way in which the survey is administered is critical to its success and to protecting the rights of our students, so at the time of the survey please do the following:

1. **Separate students as much as possible so they cannot easily see each other's answers.**

2. **Read the following statement aloud *before* passing out questionnaires:**

- Today you are going to fill out a questionnaire about the MVP Day situations. It is *not* a test.

- Your answers are private – no one will know who you are. Don't write your name anywhere on the paper.

- Completing this survey is voluntary. You do not have to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable or that you don't understand.

- Be as honest as possible with your answers. Just write down your first reaction to a question and move on.

- You do NOT have to use a #2 pencil to fill out the questionnaire. You may use either a pen or a pencil.

- Be sure to read the instructions at the beginning of the questionnaire and read each question carefully.

- Work quietly without talking. Raise your hand if you have any questions.

- When you finish, put your questionnaire in the envelope at the front of the room and quietly read or do school work.

- If you already filled out this questionnaire in another period earlier today, please indicate that on the front of the questionnaire, and sit quietly at your desk while the other students are completing the questionnaire.

3. **Pass out a questionnaire to each student.**

4. **Be sure that students are working independently and not discussing their answers.**

5. **Be sure not to influence student responses. The best way to answer student questions is to say, "It is whatever it means to you" or "Do your best," or remind them that they can skip any item that makes them feel uncomfortable or they don't understand.**

6. **Do not review survey as they are returned, even if this means accepting incomplete data.** Students must be confident that their privacy will be maintained and their participation will remain anonymous.

7. **At the end of the period, collect all questionnaires and place them in the envelope (including all blanks).**

8. **Fill out the following information:**

Complete This Section

Teacher's name: _____   Room number: ____

MVP Day session <u>this class</u> attended:

☐ A Block (7:50-8:45 AM) *Little Theatre*
☐ B Block (9:25-10:20 AM) *Little Theatre*
☐ D Block (10:25-11:20 AM) *Little Theatre*
☐ G Block, First Lunch (11:25-11:55 AM) *Little Theatre*
☐ G Block, First Lunch (11:25-11:55 AM) *Film Lecture Hall*

☐ G Block, Second Lunch (12:05-12:30 PM) *Little Theatre*
☐ G Block, Second Lunch (12:05-12:30 PM) *Film Lecture Hall*
☐ F Block (1:20-2:35 PM) *Little Theatre*

How many students are enrolled in this class? ____

How many students were absent during the survey period today? ____

Write down the number(s) of any questions that were confusing to students:

Were there any other problems?

---

9. **Insert this sheet back in the envelope with the surveys, seal the envelope, and return the sealed envelope to <u>Beals House – MVP Box</u>.**

If you have any questions, please direct them to Nancy Beardall. Thank you for your help!

MVP Day Feedback Form

We'd like you to tell us what you thought of the recent MVP Day here at Newton North. Just answer the questions as well as you can. You can skip any question you would rather not answer, but it will help if you answer as many as you can.

Your answers will be confidential. The code below will just be used to compare surveys to each other, but all of your answers will be kept private and will never be seen by anyone who knows you.

Please begin by completing the following "private code." Thank you.

> Start Here:

1. **Please fill in the code below that will let us compare surveys anonymously. Read the instructions carefully. Remember that this survey is strictly confidential and anonymous – you CANNOT be identified by your code.**

   PRIVATE CODE

   Month in which you were born (write in the month, like "August") ...._____

   Last number of your *main* phone number (like "7" if your # is 555-2427) ....____

   Last letter of *your* LAST name ....____

   First number in your address (like "1" if address is 123 Main St.) ....____

2. **Were you absent from school on Tuesday, February 13th (on MVP Day)?** (check *one*)
   ☐ *No* – Continue to answer the questions.
   ☐ *Yes* – You do not have to continue. Please pass your survey in to the teacher.

3. **Did you already complete this same survey in another class earlier today?** (check *one*)
   ☐ *No* – Continue to answer the questions.
   ☐ *Yes* – You do not have to continue. Please pass your survey in to the teacher.

4. **Are you currently a member of MVP (Mentors in Violence Prevention)?** (check *one*)
   ☐ *No*   ☐ *Yes*

5. **Are you:** (check *one*)
   ☐ *Male*   ☐ *Female*

6. **What grade are you in?** (check *one*)
   ☐ *9th*   ☐ *10th*   ☐ *11th*   ☐ *12th*

7. **Which of the MVP Day sessions and activities did you attend?** (check *all that apply*)

    7:50-8:45 AM (A Block)
    ☐ *Little Theatre:* *A skit about a party where drinking takes place and a sexual assault occurs.*

    9:25-10:20 AM (B Block)
    ☐ *Little Theatre:* *A skit about a party where drinking takes place and a sexual assault occurs.*

    10:25-11:20 AM (D Block)
    ☐ *Little Theatre:* *Two short skits focused on how put-downs, rumors and stereotypes can escalate into a more hostile environment.*

    11:25-11:55 AM (G Block, First Lunch)
    ☐ *Little Theatre:* *A series of vignettes about peer pressure, gender stereotypes, homophobia and exclusion.*
    ☐ *Film Lecture Hall:* *A discussion of the role of the media and music in contributing to gender stereotypes, gender inequality and negative body image.*

    12:05-12:30 PM (G Block, Second Lunch)
    ☐ *Little Theatre:* *A series of essays, stories and poems about gender stereotypes, relationships, harassment, sexual harassment and dating assault.*
    ☐ *Film Lecture Hall:* *Video of Newton North MVP mentors from the last nine years sharing their experiences of MVP in high school and where they took their experiences after high school.*

    1:20-2:35 PM (F Block)
    ☐ *Little Theatre:* *Two short skits focused on how put-downs, rumors and stereotypes can escalate into a more hostile environment.*

8. **Below is a set of different situations that you might experience. Think about how your reaction to these scenarios may have changed based on what you saw and heard during MVP Day. Read each statement carefully and check the box that best describes how likely it is that you would do what is written after taking part in MVP Day.** (check *one* box on *each* line)

After taking part in MVP Day, how likely would you now be to...	less		About		More →
	Much **Less** *Likely*	*Less* *Likely*	*as* *Likely*	*More* *Likely*	**Much** *More* *Likely*
take part if your friends were spreading rumors about another person at school?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
do something (like join a club) if you knew your friends would make fun of you if they found out?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
laugh if your friend told you a funny but sexist joke?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
tell an adult at school if you knew that one student was planning to beat up another?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

After taking part in MVP Day, how likely would you now be to...	less		About		More →
	Much **Less** *Likely*	*Less* *Likely*	*as* *Likely*	*More* *Likely*	**Much** *More* *Likely*
tell your friends it was inappropriate if you heard them making rude comments about a girl who was wearing a short skirt or shorts, like calling her a slut?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
tell your friends to stop if they were pressuring someone to do something dangerous?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
stay friends with someone if you found out they were gay?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
offer to help or get help for a girl who was being pinched or grabbed inappropriately in the hall at school?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

After taking part in MVP Day, how likely would you now be to...	Much Less Likely	Less Likely	About as Likely	More Likely	Much More Likely
try and stop your friends if they were spreading rumors about another person at school and you knew that what they were saying was not true?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
push or shove your boyfriend/girlfriend to emphasize a point if you were having an argument?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
help a girl get out of a situation at a party where it looked like a guy was trying to take advantage of her?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
laugh if your friend told you a funny but racist joke?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

After taking part in MVP Day, how likely would you now be to...	Much Less Likely	Less Likely	About as Likely	More Likely	Much More Likely
tell your friends it was inappropriate if they were calling a guy gay or a fag to make fun of him?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
try and stop a group of guys that you didn't know well from harassing a girl at a party?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
take part if your friends were making fun of someone you didn't know and calling that person names?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
use sexually graphic or explicit language to tease someone, even if you were just fooling around?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. **Below is a series of statements about how you might feel after taking part in MVP Day. Think about what you experienced that day and mark whether you disagree or agree with each statement.** (check one box on each line)

Based on what I experienced during MVP Day, I feel...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
more comfortable confronting my friends when they are teasing or harassing someone we don't know.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
more aware of how certain situations can lead to sexual harassment and assault.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
more comfortable talking about sexual harassment and assault with people at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
more informed about the legal issues involving consent and non-consent for sexual activity in situations where people are drinking or using drugs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
like I would have a lot of support in this school if someone was harassing me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
more aware of how teasing and harassing others can create an environment where not everyone feels safe.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
like I would know what to do if a friend of mine came to me and said they had been sexually assaulted.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. **What is one message that you feel you understand more fully or learned from MVP Day?** (write in, use the back if you need more room)

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions for MVP Alumni Students

Interview Questions for alumni students

• What motivated you to participate in the MVP training?

• As you were going through the training, identify what ideas resonated and/or influenced you the most?

• As a result of the training do you view gender stereotyping, the media, sexual harassment and teen dating abuse differently now? If so, how?

• Describe how the MVP program made an impact on you?

• What was your most significant learning as an MVP mentor?

• Has your role as bystander changed or not? If so, how?

• When you come forward as an active bystander, how did your high school peers respond?

• What has your experience been with the MVP role plays--either as an actor or an observer?

• What did you see as the relationship between the power of the arts, in this case drama and the clothesline display, as giving voice to the issues related to MVP?

• In your opinion did the dramatic role plays performed during MVP Day influence your attitudes and bystander actions? How?

• In your opinion did observing the role plays, help you to integrate MVP's messages?

• What was it like to be a peer mentor to your fellow high school students?

• What did you feel most proud of in your MVP work?

• How did you feel you have developed as a person through your MVP work?

• What changes in the school climate did you observe, if any, while you were a mentor?

• How has MVP effected you beyond high school and how might you be involved with MVP goals in your life today?

APPENDIX E

MVP Day Program

<u>**Faculty Advisors**</u>

Nancy Beardall MVP Coordinator, Albert Cho, Al Calderone, Jamie Moore, Michele Kennedy

<u>**Special Thanks To**</u>

Jennifer Price, Adam Brown, Nancy DiMella, Gwen Smith, Margaret Hannah, Lynne Rossman, Amanda Mazzola, Peter Roby, Tom Donnellan, Jeanne White, Custodial Staff, Priscilla Harmel, Michele Cummins, Dana deBernardo, MVP members, the faculty, and parents and who have supported MVP in its nine years at Newton North.

<u>**Resources at Newton North**</u>

- Guidance Counselors
- Alison Malkin
  (617) 559-6237, Room 333
- Youth Officers-Katie Cosgrove, Dave Spirito

<u>**Other Resources:**</u>

<u>National Domestic Violence Hotline:</u>
www.ndvh.org
1-800-799-safe
<u>Teen Reach, 781-209-2265</u>
<u>Jane Doe Inc./Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault</u>
<u>and Domestic Violence</u>
14 Beacon Street, Suite 507
Boston, MA 02108
1-877-785-2020

Visit the Clothesline on Main Street for the latest statistics relating to MVP and resources for help.

We Can, We Will

Together

Mentors in Violence

Prevention

Newton North High School

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

APPENDIX F

Newton Public Schools Research Information

NEWTON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
100 Walnut Street, Newtonville, MA 02460-1398   Phone: 617-559-6125
Office of Curriculum & Instruction

To: Date:

From: Carolyn D. Wyatt, Ed.D.,
           Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

Re: Approval of Research in the Newton Public Schools

The following procedures must be followed by persons requesting the use of facilities or students
in the Newton Public Schools for research purposes.

1.   A letter formally requesting permission to conduct research must be sent to this office by
      the principal investigator. It must include:
      a. Names and duties of all persons involved in the conduct of the research.
      b. Research goals.
      c. Relevance of research to the Newton Public Schools.

2.   The form on the back of this page must also be filled out and returned to the Office of
      Curriculum and Instruction.

3.   To complete the information we need before making a final decision, the researcher must
      submit in writing a step-by-step procedure for the conduct of the research. Copies of all
      research instruments and permission forms that the researcher intends to use must also
      accompany the research request.

4.   The request will be evaluated according to the following:
      a. Is the research relevant to ongoing programs and activities? Will the study provide
          information that will be useful to principals and teachers?
      b. What assurances can you give which will ensure that the anonymity of students,
          teachers, and the school will be protected?
      c. Is the research design technically sound?
      d. Will the research interfere with normal school routine?

5.   If approved by this office, we will send a memo to principals describing the research and
      asking if they would like to have their schools participate. If a principal is interested, we
      will notify the researcher to get in touch with that principal. It is then the researcher's
      responsibility to secure permission from the principal to conduct research in that school.

6.   The researcher agrees to send a written report of the findings to the principal(s) of the
      school(s) involved and to this office.

Home Address:_____

Request for Research Access

Name of Person Requesting:_____ Date:_____

Official Status:_____

Institution:_____

Phone: (Office)_____ (Home) _____

Name of Supervising Professor (if any): _____

Names of all who are involved in this research and their duties: _____

_____

Title of Project or Study:_____

Purpose: _____

Needs: Age or Grade Range: _____

    Number: _____ Sex: _____

    Amount of Time per Student: _____

    Other: _____

    _____

Previous Contacts in Newton (if any): _____

Date Project or Study Will Begin: _____ Date Project or Study Expected to End: _____

Brief Description / Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

NEWTON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
100 Walnut Street, Newtonville, MA 02460-1398   Phone: 617-559-6125
Office of Curriculum & Instruction   Fax: 617-559-6126

January 6, 2006

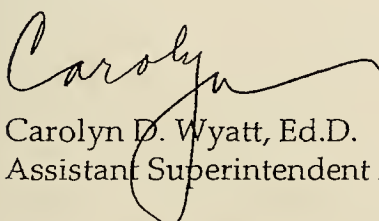Nancy Beardall
49 Victoria Circle
Newton, MA 02459

Dear Nancy:

We have reviewed your request to conduct research in the Newton Public Schools and we are pleased to approve your project, *Mentors in Violence Prevention*, that will assess our secondary schools' MVP Program.

Your work may provide important insights regarding our implementation of violence prevention initiatives in other schools within the district. This work complements our K-12 Anti-Bullying initiative, as well. I know that you will share your data and completed research paper with us.

We look forward to receiving a summary of your findings and would be willing to work with you to make your findings available to others in the district and our larger community.

Sincerely,

Carolyn D. Wyatt, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

CC: Gwen Smith, Physical Education, Health and Wellness Coordinator

CDW/ab

APPENDIX G

Figure 4, Diagram of "Integrated Pedagogical Process"
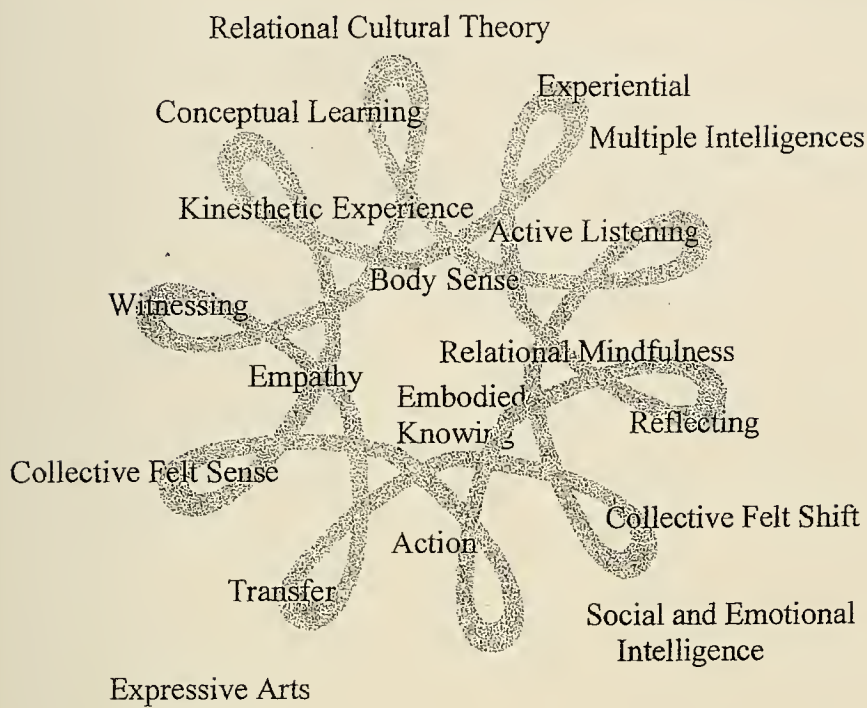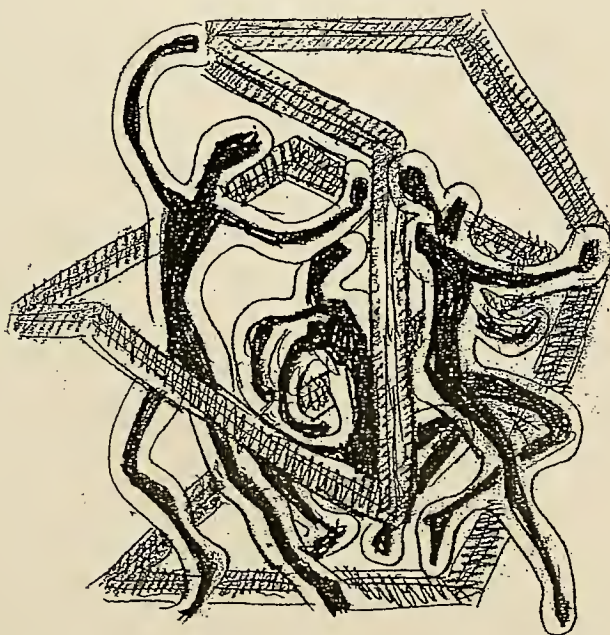
Figure 4: *Integrated Pedagogical Process*

Relational Cultural Theory

Experiential

Conceptual Learning

Multiple Intelligences

Kinesthetic Experience

Active Listening

Body Sense

Witnessing

Relational Mindfulness

Empathy

Embodied
Knowing

Reflecting

Collective Felt Sense

Collective Felt Shift

Action

Transfer

Social and Emotional
Intelligence

Expressive Arts

Figure 5: *Laban drawing from* **Rudolf Laban, An Extraordinary Life** *by V. Preston-Dunlap*

80. A three-ring harmonic form danced by three figures within an icosahedral framework. (Laban Archive, National Resource Centre for Dance.)

APPENDIX H

Diagram of MVP Organization Structure

Institutionalization of MVP in Middle and High Schools

COORDINATOR
- Program/curriculum development in high schools & middle schools
- Implementation & assessment
- Overall program coordination

Newton North High School

Newton South High School

FACULTY ADVISORS
- High school & middle schools training
- Oversee X block meetings
- Meet with coordinator & captains

Communication

FACULTY ADVISORS
- High school & middle schools training
- Oversee J block meetings
- Meet with coordinator & captains

FRESHMAN ASSEMBLY
Previous MVP students & Advisors present to 9th grade class at end of school year

4-6 captains chosen for each school

SOPHMORE ASSEMBLY
Previous MVP students & Advisors present to 10th grade class at beginning of school year

MENTOR SELECTION
- Students apply, describe what they offer MVP & why want to join
- Coordinator & Advisors select students

Take Back the Night

MENTOR SELECTION
- Students apply, with references, describe what they offer MVP & why want to join
- Coordinator & Advisors select students

MENTOR TRAINING
- 2 Days of full day training
- meet every other week during X block

MVP Day

MENTOR TRAINING
- 2 Days of full day training
- meet every other week during J block

MIDDLE SCHOOL VISITS
Mentors visit Day & Bigelow

MIDDLE SCHOOL VISITS
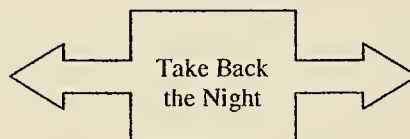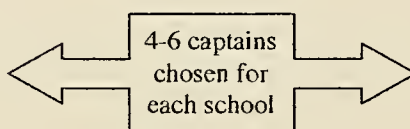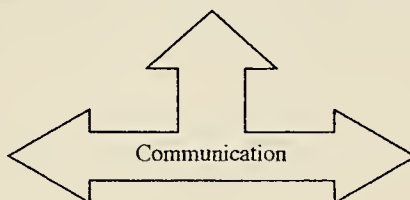Mentors visit Oak Hill & Brown

Session 1
"Gender Box Exercise"
- Reflect on media's messages about gender stereotypes
- Discussing ways students are outside the box and proud of it

Session 2
"Active Bystander"
- Define vocabulary
- Role play various scenarios addressing harassing situations and how student can play a role in prevention

Session 3
"Action Plan"
- Learn how disrespectful language can lead to more serious harassment & abuse
- Develop action plan to address gender respect & prevent sexual harassment

APPENDIX I

Teacher Handouts for Newton North High School Faculty

Sexual Harassment Information

Background Information
We all are aware as educators that it takes a community to hold consistent values and messages that promote a safe, secure and inclusive school environment. This information sheet will help us all send a consistent message to our students. Listed below is a history of sexual harassment law, definition of sexual harassment, ways in which sexual harassment takes place and the cast of characters involved. Suggestions for how to respond to sexual harassment situations, and recommendations for members of a sexual harassment team are on the back.

Civil Rights Act (1964) and Title IX Educational Amendments (1972)
"No person...shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, and be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance..."

Under Title IX there is a Sexual Harassment Office

Definition of Sexual Harassment from "Flirting or Hurting" by Stein and Sjostrom
Sexual harassment is unwanted and unwelcomed sexual behavior which interferes with your right to get an education or to participate in school activities. In school, sexual harassment may result from words or conduct of a sexual nature that offend, stigmatize, demean, frighten, or threaten you because of your sex.
Sexual harassment can contribute to creating a "hostile environment" that can cause the target to feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, threatened and interfere with your right to get an education or participate in school activities.

The target determines whether an incident is sexual harassment or not.

Supreme Court Decision: May 24, 1999
The U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision that raised the importance of sexual harassment to national importance. The court held, for the first time that a school district is liable for monetary damages, under Title IX when:
- The school district is deliberately indifferent to known acts of student-on-student sexual harassment.
- The sexual harassment is so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive that it effectively bars the victim's access to an educational opportunity or benefit.

Sexual harassment can happen:
- Visually
- Written
- Physically
- Orally
- Gesturally

Cast of Characters
- Harasser
- Follower
- Witness or Bystander
- Target
- Instigator
- Activist or Active Bystander

General Response to Sexual Harassment

Students are not always clear about whether a situation is sexual harassment or not. When the target or the harasser is unclear, it becomes our responsibility to help the students understand that a particular behavior is sexual harassment. By doing this, we educate and send a consistent message about sexual harassment. The steps of an effective response to an incident of sexual harassment are:

- Stop the harasser/s, educate them and discipline if necessary

- Help get the target support

- Communication to the housemaster is important so a record can be kept; communicate with parents, counselor as needed

- Prevent retaliation

- Consistently enforce policy

- Prevent public disclosure of incidents/parties involved

- Collaborate with each other, housemasters, counselors and the school based team about cases that are difficult. Navigating these situations can be challenging and often requires a team approach in order to plan the best course of action.

The prevention of harassment and sexual harassment is an ongoing process, one in which we never fully arrive but continually need to work on as a community.

Research from the University of Minnesota (2002) suggests students who feel safe and are connected in school not only achieve better academically but also are at less risk for drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, and violent and deviant behavior.

Newton North Sexual Harassment Team: Nancy Beardall, Tom Sheehan, Alison Malkin

Interrupting Bullying, Sexual Harassment, Bigoted, Homophobic and Disrespectful Remarks or Behaviors

• It is important to intervene and send a consistent message
so all students know that disrespectful language and behavior is not
OK and will be addressed. **Silence conveys implicit permission
for the remarks or behaviors to continue.**
• Watch, notice and trust what you're seeing in front of you
• You decide--not the students
• Interrupt the pattern of escalation
• Don't expect the target to support your intervention in front of the
aggressor
• Create a "teachable moment"
• Be prepared for "we were just fooling around" or "I didn't do
anything" or he/she's my friend, or she's my girlfriend," etc.
• Let the students know that you care
• Role model respectful behaviors
• Help create a safe, respectful and welcoming school culture

Common Elements of Effective Intervention

• Timeliness
• Consistency
• Clarity
• Respectfulness
• Communication--when to report incidents and to whom
• Policies--such as sexual harassment policy, or "hearsay" of
physical danger, etc.
• Intervention Plans for Aggressors and Targets

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